DR. STRANGE

JANUARY 21, 1986

SCREENPLAY BY
BOB GALE

FADE IN:

TITLE ON BLACK:

"ASIA MINOR, 700 YEARS AGO."

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. AN ANIMAL CARCASS - DAY

The carcass of a DOG lies on the ground. Its throat has been ripped open, and the wound is lined with a horrible green substance, a sickening cross between mold and slime.

Now SHADOWS fall across the carcass...the shadows of TWO MEN, looking at the dead animal.

The TWO FIGURES bend down beside the dead animal. The first is an OLD MAN, strong, wise and stoic. He is called ABAR-MU and his body language suggests an oriental upbringing. He is bald and wears a simple brown robe with a striking AMULET around his neck---a perfectly smooth, rounded jewel, clear, yet with the rainbow effect of a prism. His striking RING also contains a similar jewel.

With him is his PUPIL, known as "TIRO" ("one who must learn"), a youth of 19 with a single EARRING: an ANKH. He carries a sack of supplies. Tiro reaches out, about to touch the green slime, but his master gently pushes his hand aside.

ABAR-MU
Don't touch it.

Tiro looks to the older man for an explanation, but there isn't going to be one.

Abar-Mu extends his hands over the carcass and closes his eyes as if meditating. Is it our imagination, or is there a sudden brief flash in his amulet?

ABAR-MU
(opens his eyes)
We are near.

EXT. A SMALL VILLAGE - DAY

A small rural village of ramshackle huts---but there is no one around. We hear the steady TOLL of a DRUM.

Abar-Mu and Tiro walk through the deserted village, toward the sound. They come around a grove of trees.

EXT. A FUNERAL SITE

30-odd villagers are gathered for a FUNERAL. The village SHAMAN presides, chanting over a crude open coffin.

As Abar-Mu and Tiro approach, heads turn to see the strangers. The Shaman sees them and stops the ceremony.

ABAR-MU
Our humble apologies. We did not mean to interrupt.

SHAMAN
State your purpose.

Abar-Mu withdraws a yellowed scroll from his robe.

ABAR-MU
We search for this object, called "Skulkane." Does anyone know of it?

The scroll depicts a drawing of something that looks like a key---but at the same time, other-worldly. The tip comes to a sharp point.

The Shaman takes a closer look. So do other villagers. No one reacts with recognition.

ABAR-MU
It is the key to hell. Those who worship it have red eyes.

A WOMAN in a black shawl, about 30, reacts. She has been crying beside the coffin---clearly she is the bereaved.

WOMAN
As he died, my husband said he had been attacked by a man with red eyes.

Abar-Mu and Tiro approach the coffin and look in.

THEIR P.O.V. OF THE CORPSE

The dead man's throat has been ripped open by teeth. Around the wound is the same greenish slime we saw on the dog.

BACK TO SHOT

Abar-Mu and Tiro exchange a look of concern.

WOMAN
(sobs)
My son...he was with him. He never came back. No one will look for him.

SHAMAN
(to the woman)
The boy was devoured by the animal that killed your husband. There is nothing anyone can do.

ABAR-MU
Where did this attack take place?

WOMAN
(points)
Near the river.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RIVER - DAY

Abar-Mu and Tiro approach the wooded river bank. The river is too wide to wade across. Interestingly, while the grass on their side of the river is lush and green, the grass on the other side is brown and dead. Many trees on the other side are charred, twisted and dead as well.

Abar-Mu notes the difference.

ABAR-MU
Life...and death.

Tiro nods with trepidation. This is very weird, and he's a little scared.

ABAR-MU
(sits down)
I must meditate. Search along the river for a place to cross.

TIRO
Alone?

Abar-Mu nods. He notices the youth's fear.

ABAR-MU
You have forgotten the Book of the Vishanti? "The strong man with fear is weak; the weak man with courage is strong."

TIRO
I remember. I also remember that it says, "Trust not everything found in books."

ABAR-MU
You learn well, pupil. So I shall be frank: I send you alone as bait, to trap a demon.

Tiro gulps. He puts down the sack, and begins walking along the river, muttering to himself.

TIRO
"The strong man with fear is weak; the weak man with courage is strong."

CUT TO:

FURTHER ALONG THE RIVER

Tiro walks along the wooded river bank, looking around constantly: he's scared.

He hears a high-pitched SCREECH and reacts with a start---but it's only a BIRD. He sighs, then pulls out a SLINGSHOT and STONE: why not be prepared?

He keeps glancing into woods, stopping occasionally to listen. He hears only birds.

He continues on, then stops a moment to glance over his shoulder. He thinks he's being followed, but there's nothing behind him.

He moves on. There is definitely the sound of something behind him. He stops. The sound stops. Afraid to look back, he takes a few steps forward. Yes, something IS tracking him.

Tiro stops, takes a deep breath, readies his slingshot, then whirls around---

There's nothing there! As he moves his feet, he realizes the situation: a VINE is looped around his left foot and he's been dragging it, creating the noise.

Tiro laughs, then bends down to detatch the vine...

Suddenly, a HUMAN FIGURE DROPS ON HIM FROM ABOVE! Tiro loses his weapon in the surprise attack. The "man" is naked, savage, and as Tiro struggles against him, he sees the attacker's face: RED EYES, and foaming GREEN SLIME at the mouth!

Tiro grabs a handful of dirt and throws it in the creature's eyes. The demon reels, blinded. Tiro picks up a large fallen tree limb. He swings it at the creature's head like a baseball bat. The savage goes down.

Tiro raises the weapon over his head, ready to swing it down on the creature, but it grabs Tiro's foot and pulls him down on top of him! The two struggle, rolling around, the demon gripping Tiro firmly. Tiro struggles to escape, but the demon is too strong for him.

TIRO
Master...!

Now, Abar-Mu appears from a blue glow behind a tree---from the opposite direction to where we last saw him. He sees the struggle, then closes his eyes, as if going into a trance.

Meanwhile, the demon moves into the upper position, and bares his teeth---obviously ready to rip into Tiro's neck.

Abar-Mu's amulet glows RED...and this red glow then envelops the mystic's entire body...

The demon's mouth foams with green slime, which begins dripping on Tiro's neck. Tiro winces in pain.

Now Abar-Mu opens his eyes. Enveloped in the red glow, he's full of power and strength. He raises an arm, then makes a throwing gesture and hurls a RED MYSTIC BOLT OF ENERGY at the creature!

The creature is knocked backward, off of Tiro. It turns and sees Abar-Mu approaching. It rises, eyes flashing, ready to attack Abar-Mu.

ABAR-MU
Watch the savage, my pupil! Don't let your eyes leave him.

Tiro turns his gaze toward the demon.

Abar-Mu, still enveloped in the red glow, raises both of his arms, and brings his hands together.

The demon rushes Abar-Mu.

Immediately the old man whips his arms down, unleashing a tremendous bolt of red energy at the creature.

The demon burns white-hot in a nova-like flash---then his ethereal remains shoot off like a comet toward a particular point across the river.

Tiro has never seen anything like this.

The red glow around Abar-Mu evaporates, and the amulet returns to its normal state.

ABAR-MU
You saw the demon's essence---the last vestige of what was once a soul---sucked back to his master.
(points to the spot across the river)
That is where we shall find Skulkane.

CUT TO:

EXT. CLOSE ON SKULKANE - DAY

We follow the mystic object SKULKANE as it is passed from one pair of HANDS to another. Skulkane is black, like obsidian, about 18 inches long, 3 inches in diameter, and is inscribed with mystic symbols.

The hands are in gray sleeves---religious robes. But the 4th pair of hands is in BLACK SLEEVES. These hands lift Skulkane, taking us to the bearer's face. His name is KODOR, and he exudes evil: jagged features, coal black hair and black eyes.

KODOR
Hear us, oh, Exalted One! We are here to set you free!

As Kodor continues, we WIDEN, revealing a quasi-religious ceremony taking place in an area surrounded by jagged rock formations, not unlike Stonehenge. In the center, a BOY has been gagged and tied down on a rock slab---he is to be a human sacrifice.

There are 3 Priests in grey robes, Kodor in black robes, and 4 RED-EYED SAVAGES.

KODOR (continuing)
Long have you waited for the conditions to be fulfilled. Now, Skulkane shall both unlock the doorway to your dark dimension and be the instrument that keeps you here. Even as we have provided human souls for you to consume in the past...
(gestures toward the 4 red-eyed savages)
...soon you shall be able to feast upon all of humanity without limit. Then you shall lay bare this planet until it becomes a glorious hell!

ABAR-MU AND TIRO

peek from behind one of the rock formations and see the ceremony going on. Abar-Mu whispers to Tiro, then points at the sun. Tiro looks.

THEIR P.O.V. OF

THE SUN, amidst the clouds: a BLACK SHADOW begins to eat into the sun.

ANGLE ON THE CEREMONY

Kodor too points to the sun with an expression of triumph.

KODOR
Behold the coming darkness!
It is precisely as predicted!

ON ABAR-MU AND TIRO

ABAR-MU
(to Tiro, explaining)
It's called an Eclipse. There will be two minutes of total darkness. Only then can the conditions be fulfilled, so it is then that we must strike.

Tiro nods, then Abar-Mu moves away.

ANGLE ON THE CEREMONY

Kodor calls to the east.

KODOR
Oh, Exalted One! By many names are you known: Beelzebub, Mephistopheles, Satan... Now we invoke thy true name so that we may sanctify this moment. Now we invoke...DORMAMMU!

The others begin chanting "Dormammu, Dormammu."

The eclipse continues---the sun is 50 percent covered.

As the chanting continues, Kodor walks to the helpless boy who is struggling against his bonds.

KODOR
As darkness now begins its triumph over light, Skulkane shall be the instrument to destroy an innocent soul, thus throwing open the portal to the Dark Dimension!

He raises Skulkane over the boy's chest, like a knife. TIRO glances from the ceremony to the eclipse.

The sun is 80 percent obscured.

The CHANTING of "Dormammu" becomes faster and louder.

The sacrificial VICTIM struggles but the ropes prevent his escape.

Kodor's expression becomes more possessed, more insane. As he raises Skulkane higher, the mystic object begins to glow with an eerie orange color.

As the sky darkens, the same eerie orange glow shimmers in the sky directly opposite the eclipse. Something is beginning to come into focus---the dimensional portal is lining up. We can see that the "doorway" will be framed by two of the rock formations, and gradually, a shadowy humanoid figure is becoming visible within.

Tiro, glancing between these various elements, now pulls out his SLINGSHOT and STONE. He aims at Kodor.

The shadowy figure becomes more defined: He looks like a man, except that his head is a reddish-orange mass of constantly burning FIRE, with shadowy features within. He wears striking otherwordly garments, highlighted by a spectacular cape.

KODOR
Behold, Dormammu! His presence is only a hearbeat away!

Kodor looks to the sun: totality is mere seconds away.

Tiro pulls back on his slingshot. His hand is shaking: he's nervous.

Dormammu's form becomes clearer---it is as if he is separated from us only by a thin ectoplasmic film.

Kodor raises Skulkane higher, the moment of anticipation...

The ECLIPSE REACHES TOTALITY...

Just as Kodor begins the downward thrust...

Tiro SCREAMS!

Kodor and the priests turn in that direction.

Tiro fires the slingshot at Kodor. The stone hits him squarely in the forehead, and he falls backward, stunned.

Dormammu, clearly in focus, pushes against the dimensional barrier, unable to get through. He can see what is going on. He speaks---his voice BOOMS, reverberating all around, as if coming from everywhere.

DORMAMMU
Use Skulkane to kill the boy and set me free!

The Priest nearest the boy rushes toward the fallen Kodor and grabs Skulkane.

ABAR-MU now reveals himself, standing atop a rock formation, opposite Dormammu. His amulet glows RED, again he is enveloped in a red glow. He hurls a mystic red bolt at Skulkane, which knocks it out of the Priest's hand and sends it flying.

DORMAMMU
Slaves! Attack the sorcerer!

Immediately, the 4 red-eyed savages rush toward Abar-Mu and begin climbing the rock formation upon which he stands. They are strong, and they climb up easily.

Meanwhile, Tiro runs over to get Skulkane which has landed near him.

DORMAMMU
Skulkane! Skulkane is the key!

The Priests turn their attention to Tiro---they approach him.

Abar-Mu battles his attackers. He hurls a red bolt at the first savage. He bursts into a white nova-like flash, and his essence is sucked into Skulkane---and then into Dormammu!

Skulkane glows white hot as this happens, and Tiro winces in pain. Tiro fumbles it, but regains it.

Abar-Mu destroys his second attacker---again, as its soul gets sucked through Skulkane, the object glows white hot.

This time, Tiro drops it.

One of the Priests grabs it and with a leer of triumph, hurries toward the boy.

Tiro goes after him, but another Priest grabs him. They struggle.

The first Priest reaches the sacrificial altar.

Tiro punches his attacker in the nose, then rushes toward the altar---but the Priest raises Skulkane, ready to stab the child...

Now Abar-Mu vanquishes the third savage. As its departing soul causes Skulkane to glow white hot again, the Priest screams in pain and drops it---point down at the boy.

The boy squirms, and the point of Skulkane just misses him.

Tiro reaches the altar and grabs Skulkane. The Priest turns to attack him, but Tiro waves Skulkane at him like a weapon. He backs off.

DORMAMMU
Attack him! You are three, he is one!

The Priests move forward in unison, fanning out.

Kodor, on the ground, stirs slightly, and opens his eyes. He sees what's going on.

Tiro, unaware that Kodor has regained consciousness, backs away, toward the altar. He knows he can't fight three men at once.

But now Abar-Mu, still enveloped in red, raises his arms, then, in a violent gesture, discharges a TREMENDOUS BLAST of red mystic power: the priests are incinerated, and all that's left of them are their empty gray robes!

Kodor reacts with astonishment. He continues to lay low.

Tiro turns with gratitude, only to see Abar-Mu pounced upon from behind by the last of the red-eyed savages! The demon knocks Abar-Mu off the edge of the rock formation, and they both hit the ground.

TIRO
Master!

Abar-Mu is knocked unconcious and his amulet stops glowing. But the demon is still all right. Frothing at the mouth, it gets up and moves in on Abar-Mu, ready to rip the old man apart with its sharp teeth.

Tiro rushes the demon with Skulkane in hand. He jumps upon its back and STABS it with the mystic object. The creature HOWLS---then glows white hot. Again, its soul is sucked into Skulkane. Tiro throws the hot, glowing Skulkane down. Thinking the danger is over, he ignores it as he runs over to Abar-Mu.

But Kodor lies only a few feet from Skulkane. He sees the opportunity...

Tiro tries to revive Abar-Mu. The old man is bleeding and hurt. He moans---he's still alive.

Kodor makes his move. He grabs Skulkane and rushes to the altar.

Tiro turns and sees that Kodor is about to consummate the sacrifice. Tiro charges him and grabs him by the neck.

The ECLIPSE IS STILL IN TOTALITY as they struggle.

DORMAMMU
Stab him with Skulkane! Any human soul will free me!

Kodor gains the upper hand and gets into position to bring Skulkane down on Tiro. But Tiro grabs Kodor's arm and holds it back. Kodor uses his free hand to grab Tiro's neck. Tiro gasps, choking. It doesn't look good.

Abar-Mu tries to pull himself up, but he's too weak. He falls back down, unable to save his disciple.

Tiro winces---his arms are shaking, barely able to hold back Kodor's knife hand. Then, Tiro knees Kodor hard in the groin! The black robed priest falls backward in pain, dropping Skulkane!

Tiro regains his breath, then quickly grabs the object.

Kodor gets up, ready to face him...then they are bathed by SUNLIGHT: The eclipse has passed totality, and the sun peeks out from behind the moon.

DORMAMMU
You have failed me, Kodor!

KODOR
I have failed you. And I pay the price.

Kodor walks purposefully toward the dimensional portal. As he steps into it, he bursts into flame. He is consumed in seconds.

DORMAMMU
(to Tiro)
Hear me, Mortal! You have dared thwart my desire to establish a kingdom of darkness upon earth, a living hell of pain and suffering, that I might feast upon human souls without limit. I shall be revenged. Though you, as a disciple of the mystic arts, may survive many earthly lifetimes, still you shall grow old and weak, while Dormammu remains immortal and strong. There shall be other cosmic moments when my dimension crosses yours. Someday, I shall walk the earth, darkness shall triumph over light and I shall be revenged!

Dormammu's image and voice become less discernable as the sun becomes brighter and the dimensional portal moves out of alignment.

TIRO
Not if I destroy Skulkane!

Tiro picks up a Skulkane and smashes it against a rock---but the rock shatters; Skulkane remains intact. He tries again with a bigger rock, with the same result.

DORMAMMU
(laughs)
No power on earth can destroy Skulkane! By my power it was created, and only by my power can it be destroyed! I shall be revenged...!

With that, Dormammu's image fades completely.

Tiro goes to the fallen Abar-Mu. He's weak.

ABAR-MU
Drop the cursed object and take my ring.

Tiro puts on the ring.

ABAR-MU
Now take my hand.

Tiro does so. Again, Abar-Mu's amulet glows red, and Tiro's ring glows red along with it. This time the glow engulfs them both. Abar-Mu takes Tiro's hand and aims it at Skulkane. A tremendous bolt of red energy shoots forth and CRACKS SKULKANE IN TWO.

ABAR-MU
Although we cannot destroy Skulkane, our combined energy can at least divide it.
And now, my disciple, my time has come. My amulet is yours: study it and use its Power wisely.
You are now the Protector.
Take Skulkane. Hide half beyond your sight and keep half within your sight. In this way, I pray that Dormammu will never walk the earth again.

TIRO
Master, please, let me tend to your wounds.

ABAR-MU
Take the amulet first. Take it.
(Tiro doesn't want to)
You must.

Tiro reluctantly takes it.

A beat, then Abar-Mu ages before our eyes, withering away into a skeleton, then disintegrating into a pile of dust.

There is a sharp CRY. Tiro turns. It is the boy---he's just witnessed this sight.

Tiro is saddened. He wipes the tears from his eyes, then puts the amulet around his neck and picks up the two halves of Skulkane. He goes to the altar and frees the boy.

TIRO
Come boy, I'll take you home.

He takes the youth's hand and they walk off, leaving us to linger on the pile of dust that had been Abar-Mu. A wind comes up and blows the dust away, and we

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NYC HOSPITAL CORRIDOR, PRESENT DAY - DAY

The double doors to an OPERATING ROOM swing open and out steps DOCTOR STEPHEN STRANGE. Strange is about 40, cocky, self-assured, handsome, with black hair, a little gray at the temples, and an Errol Flynn moustache. He wears operating room greens. He rips off his mask with a dramatic flourish and smiles.

STRANGE
Ladies and gentlemen: I have succeeded.

A volley of flashbulbs fire amidst scattered applause: Dr. Strange is addressing a group of REPORTERS and PHOTOGRAPHERS. The media follow Strange as he walks along the coridor, accompanied by an entourage of nurses and interns. Strange changes his clothes with the help of a nurse as they proceed down the hall.

REPORTER #1
Dr. Strange, how long did the operation actually take?

STRANGE
(consults stopwatch around his neck)
3 hours and 11 minutes.

REPORTER #2
Dr. Strange, the bypass surgery you just performed was termed "impossible" by all the experts. How do you explain your stunning success in the face of such doubt?

STRANGE
There's only one expert whose opinion I trust: my own.

REPORTER #3
Doctor, this operation clearly establishes you as one of the world's greatest surgeons. How do you feel about that?

STRANGE
Well, I can't say that I'm surprised.

Some laughter. Strange may be conceited, but he's charming about it.

TV CAMERAMAN
Show us those hands of yours, Dr. Strange!

Strange raises his precious hands with pride. More flashbulbs go off.

STRANGE
My most prized possessions. I'll also show you how I keep them in shape...

Strange withdraws a red ball from his pocket. With deft manipulation, Strange "multiplies" it into two, three and four balls, then back to one again. Strange is as good as any stage magician with the trick---clearly he's a master of sleight of hand. Then he switches to his left hand and does it again, equally as well.

STRANGE
On the rare occasion that I fumble the balls, I won't set foot into the operating room.
(a beat)
Nor will I step into an operating room if the patient can't afford my fee.

Strange exits through a door outside. The reporters follow.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Strange heads over to a RED MASERATI parked nearby in a NO PARKING ZONE.

REPORTER #1
Your colleagues call you avaricious because of that attitude.

STRANGE
I call it honesty. I like money. I like what it buys. And I'm not ashamed to admit it.

Strange gets into his flashy vehicle, revs it up and smiles for the cameras.

STRANGE
Or flaunt it.

He roars off, and we FOLLOW to establish the New York City skyline beyond.

CUT TO:

EXT. FARNSWOOD HOSPITAL - DAY

Establishing. A brand new private suburban hospital. Strange's Maserati is parked in front.

INT. OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR - DAY

The director, DR. JACK SAPPERSTEIN, is a greying man of 55. He sits behind his desk, discussing something with Dr. Strange, and he can't believe what Strange has just told him.

SAPPERSTEIN.
What do you mean, you won't do charity work?

STRANGE
I don't give away what I charge everyone else for.

SAPPERSTEIN
Strange, we're offering you a ridiculous amount of money to be a member of our staff, for which you have to do virtually nothing more than show up twice a year to add some credibility to this place. Our only other requirement is half a dozen charity cases per year.

STRANGE
Doctor Sapperstein, if that's a requirement, then I refuse your offer.

SAPPERSTEIN
You seriously mean that you won't take charity cases?

STRANGE
You're not talking about charity, you're talking about publicity stunts. "Look how decent we are here at Farnswood Hospital." It's nothing but a rationalization so you don't feel so guilty about how much you charge your patients. I don't feel guilty about what I charge---I'm worth every cent.

SAPPERSTEIN
Strange, you are without a doubt the most arrogant son-of-a-bitch I've ever met.

STRANGE
You're right. But I'm also the best damned surgeon in the world. And if you really want me on your staff, you'll change your rules.

There is a long moment as Sapperstein stares at Strange, boiling. He stands, takes a deep breath...then extends his hand.

SAPPERSTEIN
Welcome to the staff of Farnswood, Dr. Strange.

STRANGE
The pleasure is mine, Dr. Sapperstein.

They shake hands cooly.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE BROWNSTONE - DAY

The 3-story brownstone has a FOR SALE - DO NOT DISTURB TENANT sign in front. It is old, dark, and spooky behind its wrought iron fence, and seems a bit out of place here.

Dr. Strange stands in front of it with his business manager, JIM FELDMAN.

JIM
THIS place? Stephen, you've gotta be kidding!

STRANGE
I'm serious, Jim. I want to buy it.

JIM
Look, Stephen, if you want income property, let me get you into some new apartment buildings in Connecticut. But a place like this is a money losing proposition.

STRANGE
I don't care. I just want it. Something about it fascinates me. I drove past here a few weeks ago, and I haven't been able to get it out of my mind. I can't explain it any other way, Jim. I just want it.

JIM
Okay, Stephen, it's your money. Consider it done.
Taxi!

Jim hails a cab and gets it. Strange waves.

STRANGE
Thank you, Jim.

Strange stares at the brownstone, and walks slowly around it, fascinated, a faraway look in his eyes. Suddenly a HAND taps him on the shoulder.

VOICE (O.S.)
Excuse me, mister...

Strange turns. It's a raggedy BUM, dirty and unshaven.

BUM (continuing)
Could you spare 50 cents for a cup of coffee?

Strange gives him a look.

STRANGE
Tell me the truth, fella: if I gave you 50 cents, would you really use it to buy coffee?

BUM
Oh, yes, sir, I---

But there's something about Strange's piercing stare that makes the bum suddenly drop his bullshit.

BUM
No, sir. I'd buy me a drink.

STRANGE
(nods, pulls money out of his pocket)
Here's ten bucks. Go buy yourself a decent bottle of Scotch.

The bum stares in disbelief, then takes the bill.

BUM
Thank you, sir! God bless you'

He hurries off, afraid Strange will change his mind.

Now Strange turns and notices that a bald but benign looking ORIENTAL MAN has seen the incident. He is dressed in a traditional Chinese robe. The man sees Strange and bows slightly. Strange gives him a nod, shakes his head, then heads for his car.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE BYRNE MANSION, WESTCHESTER - NIGHT

This impressive Westchester home obviously belongs to someone of wealth. The house is lit up: a PARTY is taking place. PARKING ATTENDANTS rush to serve arriving cars in the front circle drive.

Now STRANGE pulls up in his Maserati, and an ATTENDANT opens the door for him.

STRANGE
I want you to park it right over there, where it'll be safe.

ATTENDANT
I'm sorry, sir, but I can't do---

Strange gives him a twenty dollar bill.

ATTENDANT
Yes, sir, no problem, sir.

CUT TO:

INT. BYRNE MANSION - PARTY - NIGHT

CLOSE on a SCOTCH being poured over the rocks.

The BARTENDER hands it to STRANGE. He wanders through the party, a collection of well-dressed "beautiful people," and Strange fits right in. Several ATTRACTIVE WOMEN scattered around say hello to him, calling him "Stephen." He in turn greets each of them by name.

Strange wanders into another room and spots an EXOTIC LOOKING WOMAN. She's tall, with red hair, green eyes, looks about 30, and is absolutely stunning in a sleek, avant-garde outfit. Eventually, we'll learn her name is LIANA.

Strange watches her. He's never seen her before. Another man tries to pick her up, but she seems disinterested, far away. The man gives up and Strange decides its time to make his move. He straightens his tie, ready to move.

VOICE (O.S.)
Stephen! I was afraid you weren't coming.

Strange turns to see his hostess, MRS. HELENE BYRNE, coming toward him. Helene is in her late 40's, with dyed black hair punctuated with a white stripe. She has adorned her still attractive figure in an expensive black gown and at least $10,000 worth of jewelry.

STRANGE
Now, Helene, you know I'd never miss one of your parties. I'd be afraid you'd change doctors.

HELENE
Stephen, I'd never change doctors... unless a better looking one came along.

STRANGE
Listen, you've got to introduce me to the redhead standing over there---

He turns to point out Liana, but she's gone.

HELENE
Whoever she was she'd only get you into trouble. Come, you must see my latest acquisition...

INT. ADJOINING ROOM

Helene walks Dr. Strange into this room which contains an impressive collection of painting and sculpture. All by itself, on its own stand, under a spotlight, is ONE HALF OF SKULKANE.

HELENE
(gesturing with a flourish)
Ta da!

Strange looks at it, unable to figure it out.

STRANGE
What is it?

HELENE
An artifact of some sort. Religious, we think.

Strange picks it up and looks it over. It looks no worse for wear, almost exactly the same as when we last saw it.

STRANGE
Egyptian? Phonecian?

HELENE
No one seems to be able to determine its exact origin, or even its age. It was found several months ago at the bottom of the Mediterranean.

STRANGE
(shakes his head)
It's too well preserved to believe that. How much did they take you for?

HELENE
None of your business. Anyway, I wouldn't mind if I was swindled. I just love it. There's something wonderfully evil about it.

Strange gives her a look, then puts Skulkane back on its stand.

HELENE
(notices someone in the doorway)
Oh, there's Max Huntington. Excuse me, Stephen, but he has more money than you.

Helene walks over to him and begins flirting.

Strange takes another look at the object---then realizes that now someone else is here looking at it: LIANA.

STRANGE
I'm afraid our hostess is constantly being suckered into buying forgeries and fakes. Suits her, I guess.

LIANA
(she has a British accent)
There's nothing fake about it at all. It's absolutely genuine.

STRANGE
Like you?

She gives him a look, unimpressed with his pickup line. She takes out a cigarette lighter, about to light up.

STRANGE
Allow me.

He takes the lighter from her, then makes a quick SLEIGHT OF HAND move: the lighter has vanished.

STRANGE
That's funny---it was right here...

He holds out his empty hands, then with a quick jerk of his right arm, the lighter "reappears" in his right hand. He lights her cigarette.

LIANA
You forgot to say "nothing up my sleeve."

STRANGE
Ah, but that would have been lying. I've never seen you at one of Helene's parties. What's your name?

LIANA
Why don't you get me a drink first? Vodka tonic.

STRANGE
I'll be right back.

He moves quickly toward the bar.

CLOSE ON TWO VODKA TONICS

being prepared.

Strange takes them back into the room where he left Liana,...but she's gone.

STRANGE
Dammit!
(to TWO GAYS in the doorway)
Did you see a redhead go out?

GAY
Boy or girl?
(after Strange's reaction)
She just went out the front door.

Strange hands them each a drink and goes after her.

EXT. BYRNE MANSION - NIGHT

Strange runs out just in time to see Liana driving away in a WHITE MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE.

He runs over to his Maserati, climbs in, revs up and peels out after her.

INT. STRANGE'S MOVING CAR - NIGHT

Strange drives resolutely onward.

His speedometer climbs: 40, 45, 50...

The road is dark, winding, dangerous. Strange screeches around a curve, whizzing right past an unlit turn-off. He's driving way too fast, but there's still no sign of Liana's tail lights.

STRANGE
Where the hell did she go?

Strange presses the accelerator to the floor. The speedometer passes 65.

Suddenly, a figure darts out into the middle of the road!

STRANGE
Jesus!

Strange's headlights catch the figure front on---a HAIRY NAKED MAN with RED EYES.

Strange jerks the wheel and slams on his brakes to avoid hitting him---but it's too late. Strange hits him...or it...hard, and swerves out of control.

EXT. ROAD AND EMBANKMENT

Strange's Maserati screams off the road and over the embankment, CRASHING into some trees with a horrible crunch. The entire front end of the car is smashed.

On the road, there is no sign of the red-eyed figure, no corpse, no blood...only tire skids indicating an out-of-control vehicle. We HOLD, then

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON STRANGE'S FACE. He's asleep. He stirs; he opens his eyes and realizes where he is. Then his face contorts in an expression of horror as we reveal...

HIS HANDS ARE HEAVILY BANDAGED. And, his left arm is in a cast.

EXT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

We hear Dr. Strange SCREAM over this wide angle shot.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

DR. MORGAN is giving Strange a prognosis.

MORGAN
The bones will heal, you know that. But the nerves...

STRANGE
Give me the odds.

MORGAN
Zero. You're finished as an operating heart surgeon.

A long moment, then Strange LAUGHS.

STRANGE
Is that an "expert" opinion? I've been bucking the experts all my life.

MORGAN
You don't need an expert, Dr. Strange. You need technology. Only it doesn't exist yet. Microsurgery as we know it has its limits. Oh, you'll be able to use your hands for normal things, like using a fork or a pencil; maybe even removing splinters and setting bones. But for the kind of sensitivity you need to perform heart surgery...
you may as well be wearing boxing gloves for the rest of your life.

STRANGE
I say you're wrong.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON STRANGE'S BANDAGED HANDS

as a NURSE removes the bandages.

DR. STRANGE watches intently.

So does DR. MORGAN.

Both of them react with pained expressions as they see

Strange's bruised hands. They're black and blue from surgery, yellow and pale from being bandaged, and flaked with dry, dead skin.

MORGAN
I doubt you'll be able to bend your fingers without physical therapy.

Strange tries. He can't. He tries harder, concentrating intently. Sweat forms on his forehead; he's obviously in a lot of pain. But he keeps trying. At last his finger bend just a little bit.

Strange smiles triumphantly and gives Morgan a look.

STRANGE
Wrong again.

CUT TO:

PHYSICAL THERAPY SEQUENCE

in which we see STRANGE under the supervision of various therapists working to get his hands in shape. The images include:

Strange immersing his hands ina hand-sized WHIRPOOL BATH.

A THERAPIST massaging Strange's hands. The bruises are halfway healed now.

Strange working at grasping objects. He successfully goes from a softball to a tennis ball to a golf ball.

Strange closing his hand around a pencil. He writes his name: it's barely legible.

Strange takes his hands out of another whirlpool bath. The bruises are completely healed.

Close on a sheet of paper, where Dr. Strange's signature has been written over and over, each time becoming a little more legible. At the bottom, Strange's hand comes in and signs his name perfectly.

INT. STRANGE'S HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Strange sits on his bed, exercising with hand grips. He pauses thoughtfully, then takes a deep breath. He opens a drawer and pulls out his multiplying ball trick. Very deliberately, he places the trick ball between the thumb and index finger of his right hand. He tries to manipulate it: it falls to the floor, spilling the false shells all over.

STRANGE
Damn.

CUT TO:

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING, UPPER WEST SIDE - DAY

A LIMOUSINE pulls up to an exclusive apartment building and the DRIVER opens the door for DR. STRANGE. A group of REPORTERS rush him with cameras and microphones, but Strange ignores them as he walks quickly toward the apartment house.

REPORTER #1
How does it feel to be home, Dr. Strange?

REPORTER #2
How soom before you're able to go back to surgery?

REPORTER #3
How about showing us those hands of yours, Dr. Strange?

Strange completely ignores him.

REPORTER #3
Show us your hands, Dr. Strange.

Strange goes into the building without paying him the slightest bit of attention. The "interview" is over. As the group of reporters break up, we notice that among them is the BALD ORIENTAL MAN we saw earlier.

INT. DR. STRANGE'S STUDY - NIGHT

Strange's study is impeccably furnished in Italian contemporary style. DR. SAPPERSTEIN sits down INTO FRAME.

SAPPERSTEIN
So, how are the hands?

WIDER, ON STRANGE AND SAPPERSTEIN

Strange reacts coldly, interpreting the comment as a dig. As the scene continues, he applies medicinal cream to his fingers.

STRANGE
I know why you've come, Sapperstein. I've been expecting it. You've "regrettably decided to remove me from the staff of your hospital."

SAPPERSTEIN
On the contrary. I came to tell you that we want you to stay on, as a consulting surgeon.

STRANGE
Then I resign.

SAPPERSTEIN
Excuse me?

STRANGE
I'm not a consulting surgeon. I'm an operating surgeon, the best in the world. I don't consult with or for anyone. I have my pride.

SAPPERSTEIN
Yeah, and enough extra for everybody in the state. Get off your high horse, Strange. It's a different ball game now. Can't you see I'm trying to play on your side?

STRANGE
(sighs)
I'm sorry. I just don't want any handouts. I don't want people feeling sorry for me.

SAPPERSTEIN
I've got news for you, Strange, not too many of 'em do, and I'm not one of 'em. I'm here to offer you a job; plain, simple and legitimate.

Strange softens. He lets his more human side show as he realizes he's behaved like a complete asshole.

STRANGE
Doctor, I apologize for my arrogance, and I want to sincerely thank you for your kind offer. But I hope you'll understand that I just can't accept. I can't consult. To me, that's giving up, throwing in the towel. I've never given up on anything in my life. If I had, I wouldn't be a doctor. I never had money or connections or a prayer of getting into med school. But none of that stopped me from getting where I wanted to be. I'm not going to quit now.

SAPPERSTEIN
Nobody lives forever, Dr. Strange.

STRANGE
That's exactly what the "experts" told Dave Pratt. They gave him 3 weeks to live. Then I operated on him. That was two years ago. He sent me those flowers yesterday.

Strange points to a lovely arrangment on the window sill.

STRANGE
I'll be back in the operating room, Dr. Sapperstein. It may take time; it may take a long time. But these hands are all I've got.
(steps over to the window)
Somewhere out there is a cure. And I'm going to find it, no matter what it takes, no matter what it costs.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - THE SEARCH FOR A CURE

ACUPUNCTURE: Strange, clad in his shorts, lies on a table while an ORIENTAL ACUPUNCTURIST inserts needles into him.

STRANGE attempts the multiplying ball trick---and fails.

ELECTROTHERAPY: Strange's hands are wired with electrodes, anodes, and a mass of complex wiring tied into an array of equipment. A TECHNICIAN applies electric current. Strange's hands vibrate and he grits his teeth with pain.

A TWA JET lands at LOS ANGELES INTERNATIONAL.

CALIFORNIA ORGANIC THERAPY: Under the supervision of a bearded, sandal-clad therapist, Strange inserts his hands in a basin full of ice cubes. Then, the therapist pours a kettle of boiling water over Strange's hands. Strange winces.

A KLM JET lands at STOCKHOLM AIRPORT.

A SWEDISH HOSPITAL: A team of SWEDISH DOCTORS wheels Strange on a gurney out of an operating room. His hands are again bandaged.

IN THE SWEDISH HOSPITAL ROOM, the bandages come off. Strange's hands look even worse than they did before, full of stitches and bruises.

STRANGE again attempts his sleight of hand trick...and again fails.

CUT TO:

INT. STRANGE'S APARTMENT - DAY

JIM FELDMAN follows Strange around as Strange sells off his furniture to MRS. WERTZ, a furniture broker. When Strange agrees to a price for an item, FURNITURE MOVERS take it out. Mrs. Wertz keeps a tally with pen and paper.

MRS. WERTZ
Eighty dollars for the coffee table.

STRANGE
Sold.

MRS. WERTZ
Take it away, boys.

The movers take the coffee table.

JIM
You need the money to go to the Philipines to see WHO?

STRANGE
They're called psychic surgeons. Supposedly, they can penetrate the body without instruments while in a trance state.

JIM
I've heard of them. They're fakes.

STRANGE
Maybe, maybe not. There's a similar practice in Bolivia if the Philipines don't work out.

MRS. WERTZ
I'll give you 200 for the sofa.

The movers lift it.

STRANGE
250.

MRS. WERTZ
Forget it.

The movers put it back down.

STRANGE
All right, 200.

MRS. WERTZ
Take it away, boys.

The movers take it away.

JIM
Look, Stephen, I'll loan you some money because I'm your friend. But I've gotta tell you: you're on the verge of crossing a line---beyond medicine into...who knows what.

STRANGE
I've exhausted the bounds of conventional medicine. There's nothing else left.

JIM
It's a dead end road. You go to the Philipines and Bolivia visit these so-called "psychic surgeons"---the whole idea that you're even trusting them invalidates everything you've ever believed. Next it'll be witch doctors and faith healers.

STRANGE
Come off it, Jim. People have been cured by unconventional means. Doctors don't like to admit it, but it happens.

JIM
People get struck by lightning, too. Why cling to false hopes, Stephen? What are you trying to prove?

STRANGE
That I can win.

JIM
At what cost? Look at yourself, Stephen. You're almost broke now. What if you lose everything and still fail? Is it worth it?

STRANGE
Yes.

LONG DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET - WINTER - NIGHT

WINTER on a dingy run down street in the lower east side. MONTHS HAVE PASSED. Light snow blows through the air; there's already an inch or two on the ground, much of it dirty black snow.

We move along the street to the facade of what was once a movie theater. It's now a CHURCH, and the marquee reads, "Sat. 7 p.m. Reverend O.L. Wagner's Miracle Healing Ministry." We hear Wagner's voice in the street.

REV. WAGNER (O.S.)
...that ALL things are possible through faith.

INT. CHURCH - NIGHT

The place is half-full with mostly ethnic poor. REVEREND WAGNER, a black minister in the Ernest Angley mold, stands with a WORSHIPPER before him.

REV. WAGNER
Now, turn and face the congregation and assert your faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

Wagner turns the subject to face the congregation: it's DOCTOR STRANGE. Unshaven, poorly groomed, more grey hair, clothes in miserable shape, he looks like he's only a few steps away from skid row.

STRANGE
I believe in the Lord, Jesus Christ.
I believe that all things are possible through faith in Jesus Christ.

Strange speaks with pained desperation. He's got nowhere else to turn.

REV. WAGNER
We beseech You, O Lord, to grant a boon to this man and find him worthy of a cure.
(to Strange)
Kneel, my son.
(after Strange kneels)
Now may the power of Jesus Christ course through my hands, into yours as we pray...

Wagner takes Strange's hands in his own and shouts.

REV. WAGNER
Heal! Heal! Heal!

The congregation joins in, chanting "Heal" over and over, rising in intensity.

Strange closes his eyes in hope and prayer; perspiration pours down his face as he concentrates.

Now the chanting stops. Strange opens his eyes. Wagner looks down at him.

REV. WAGNER
Did you feel it? Did you feel the power?

STRANGE
Yes! Yes! I felt it! Yes!

Strange excitedly pulls out his multiplying ball trick. He prepares to prestidigitate in his right hand...and FAILS.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, LOWER EAST SIDE - NIGHT

Strange wanders aimlessly down the street, pausing to take a long hit on a pint bottle of rotgut. He tosses the empty bottle in a trash can, then ambles along. Coming toward him is a decently dressed MAN. Strange approaches him.

STRANGE
Pardon me, sir, could you spare any change?

MAN
(gives him a leer)
Why? So you can spend it on wine?

STRANGE
Yes, sir, that's exactly why.

MAN
Go to hell.

He walks quickly away.

Strange sighs and continues along. He wanders around a corner.

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER

Only one storefront is lit: a shop advertising "Chinese Herbs and Medicine to Cure All Ailments." The signage is in English and Chinese, and the place is open.

Strange sees the shop, looks in the windo then enters.

INT. CHINESE HERB SHOP

The place seems empty. Strange wanders down the aisle, looking around.

ORIENTAL MAN (O.S.)
May I be of service, please?

Strange turns. It's the same ORIENTAL MAN we've seen before, near the brownstone, and in front of Strange's apartment.

STRANGE
It's my hands. They look all right, but there's nerve damage---they have no sensitivity.

ORIENTAL MAN
I have no cure for that.

STRANGE
Please, there must be something. I'll do anything.

ORIENTAL MAN
Anything?

STRANGE
Yes.

The man looks at Strange curiously, then allows himself a slight smile. He leads Strange over to a desk in the back.

ORIENTAL MAN
Come. Sit down.

Strange sits. The man lights a candle and puts it in front of Strange.

ORIENTAL MAN
Put the index finger of your right hand in the flame.

STRANGE
You're crazy.

ORIENTAL MAN
Perhaps.

Strange stares at him. The oriental returns Strange's gaze, unblinking. Strange looks from his ha to the candle flame to the unwavering eyes of the oriental man.

Strange gulps, then takes a deep reath. He extends his right index finger and slowly moves it toward the flame. Closer, closer he brings it. Now only any inch away, he hesitates...then he sticks it in the fire.

Immediately the oriental man blows out the flame.

Strange sighs relief.

ORIENTAL MAN
You said you'd do anything. I had to make sure.

STRANGE
Then you CAN cure me?

ORIENTAL MAN
Not I, no. But there is one. He is a legend among my people, a mystic with great power. We know him as "Nu-ruh-jas," or The Ancient One. But the path to his door is not easy.

Strange closes his eyes; his voice drops to a whisper.

STRANGE
I'll do anything...

CUT TO:

INT. JIM FELDMAN'S OFFICE - DAY

Jim sits at his desk in his skyscraper office, immersed in paperwork. His intercom BUZZES and his SECRETARY'S VOICE comes on.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
Jim, Stephen Strange is here---

JIM
He's here? Well, send him in.

SECRETARY (V.O.)
I'm not sure you want to see him.

JIM
Of course I do. Send him in.

A beat, then Strange enters. He's only a shade tidier than he was the other night. Jim is shocked.

JIM
My God.

STRANGE
Don't say it, Jim. I know. Lord, how I know.

JIM
Stephen, we've been trying to find you for months, but there's no phone, all our letters have come back unforwardable...where've you been? What's happened?

STRANGE
I've failed.

Strange sits down. He takes a deep breath.

STRANGE
Jim, there's no reason why you should say yes, but I need to borrow about 3500 dollars. I'd rather not say why, but if you insist, I will.

JIM
Stephen, you don't have to worry about 3 grand.

STRANGE
(sighs relief)
Thank you, Jim, you're a real friend. You won't regret it, I swear.

JIM
No, Stephen, what I mean is, you've got 3500 dollars of your own...and more.

STRANGE
What do you mean?

JIM
Remember that brownstone down in the Village that you had to have? Well, the broker closed the sale right around the time of your accident and, well, in all the confusion, I forgot we'd even bought it. When we liquidated your assets, it had sort of fallen between the cracks. The bottom line is, you still own it, and we've been collecting rent for you the whole time.

Strange is amazed.

STRANGE
And it's 3500 dollars?

JIM
Exactly the amount you need. Quite a coincidence, I'd say.

STRANGE
(thoughtfully)
Maybe it's more than a coincidence.

Jim clears his throat. This is a little too esoteric for him.

JIM
I guess you'll want to put it on the market and cash out.

STRANGE
No. I'll hold on it. 3500 is enough to get me where I'm going.

JIM
Where are you going?

STRANGE
To the Himalayas.

CUT TO:

EXT. NEPAL LANDSCAPE - DAY

A spectacular Nepalese vista in the foothills of the HIMALAYAS. The jagged, snow covered peaks are breathtaking.

A small PACK TRAIN makes its way toward the mountains. It consists of 3 RUGGED NEPALI MEN, a pair of YAKS strapped with packs and supplies, a PAKISTANI MAN named AKBAR, and DR. STRANGE.

EXT. RURAL VILLAGE - DAY

The group arrives in a primitive RURAL VILLAGE. The head Nepali, named BHAN, orders a halt and gives orders to the other Nepalis. They immediately begin unloading the packs of Strange and Akbar from the Yaks.

Bhan confers with Akbar in Nepali, and Akbar nods.

STRANGE
What's going on, Akbar?

Akbar speaks English with a Pakistani accent.

AKBAR
This is as far as they will go. They're valley people---they don't know the mountains. Let's hope we can hire another guide here. If we can't, it's the end of the line.

STRANGE
We'll find someone. I'm sure of it.

AKBAR
I'm not.

CUT TO:

EXT. VILLAGE WELL - DAY

A MAN is watering his horse at the well.

Akbar and Strange approach him.

Akbar bows politely and speaks in Nepali. He points to the mountains and says one thing we understand: "Nu-ruh-jas."

LOCAL MAN
(with reverence)
Nu-ruh-jas?

Akbar nods vigorously, repeating the request and offering money.

The local man looks suspiciously at Akbar and Strange, then shakes his head and walks away.

EXT. A HUT - DAY

A "HOMEOWNER" is repairing his roof. He converses in Nepali with Akbar who stands below with Strange.

The exchange is nearly identical to the previous one. Upon hearing "Nu-ruh-jas," the homeowner looks over the two men, then adamantly shakes his head.

STRANGE
(to Akbar)
Ask him if he knows someone else who will take us.

Akbar makes the query; the man shakes his head and says something else.

AKBAR
He says it is an impossible request. Everyone in the village will refuse.

STRANGE
Offer him more money.

Akbar does so, but the man just shakes his head

AKBAR
Money isn't everything, Sahib.

STRANGE
So I've noticed.

EXT. ON THE BANKS OF A STREAM - DUSK

Strange sits staring at the mountain range, which is highlighted in golden light from the setting sun. He and Akbar have set up camp beside the stream.

Akbar throws a log on the fire and sits down beside him.

AKBAR
Every able-bodied man in the village has refused. It is as I told you in the beginning: this Nu-ruh-jas is a myth, a legend. He does not exist. It is like trying to hire a guide to find Santa Claus.

STRANGE
How many of these villagers said that the Ancient One was a myth? How many said that he didn't exist?

AKBAR
No one specifically said it---

STRANGE
Exactly. Every time you said "Nu-ruh-jas," they reacted with reverence.
(points to the mountains)
He's up there. Somewhere. And if these people won't help us, we'll find him ourselves.

Akbar gives Strange a look.

AKBAR
What do you mean, "we?"

STRANGE
I'll pay you, Akbar.

AKBAR
Money. Always money. What good is money to a dead man? I translate for you, Sahib. I am not a guide. And we cannot get a guide. And even if you knew exactly where you were going, without a guide, you can fall off a cliff, break an ankle and freeze to death, starve, die of exposure.
(a beat)
Give it up, Sahib. Whatever your reason, it can't be worth it.

STRANGE
I haven't come this far to give up.

AKBAR
There is a saying: "Desperation turns a wise man into a fool."

STRANGE
All right, maybe I am a fool. But I've already lost everything I ever had...and then something brought me here. I've got to finish it.

AKBAR
Then permit me to give you a book that may help you through difficult times.

He rummages through his pack.

STRANGE
What is it? The Hindu Bible? The Koran?

Akbar hands it to Strange: a paperback.

INSERT - BOOK COVER

"English-Nepali, Nepali-English Dictionary."

STRANGE

smiles.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE RURAL VILLAGE - NEXT DAY

Strange pages through the dictionary muttering to himself in Nepali. He sits down, takes out a pencil and begins making notes.

INT. STORE - DAY

This Nepali version of a "general store" is stocked with a conglomeration of cultures, ranging from rice and grain to canned goods, to Coca-Cola, to handmande tools, clothing, and animal skins.

The STOREKEEPER, late 20's, is arranging canned goods on a shelf.

STRANGE enters and reads Nepali from his notes.

STRANGE
(in Nepali, with subtitles)
Hello. I need supplies to go to the mountains. I have rupees.

The storekeeper answers him in rapid fire Nepali. Strange hasn't got the slightest idea what he's said.

STRANGE
Uh, I don't understand. Uh, food...
(thumbs thru dictionary)
Oh, hell. Give me a can of that, and some crackers there...

Strange points out what he wants and the man puts it on the counter.

Suddenly, a GIRL of 11 rushes in, yelling frantically to the storekeeper.

He reacts with horror, then runs out with the girl.

Strange is bewildered.

STRANGE
Hey! What about my supplies?

EXT. VILLAGE "STREET"

Strange steps outside---a number of VILLAGERS are running through the street, yelling, all hurrying to the biggest building in town: the Temple.

Strange watches, then follows.

INT. TEMPLE

Strange enters, and the situation unfolds:

The majority of the people assemble in rows, in kneeling positions to pray.

Up front, a PRIEST and his assistants arrange the altar and some sacred objects.

A FATHER comes in from the back, carrying a BOY of 9 who has a primitive ARROW sticking in his chest. The boy is bleeding and unconscious. The MOTHER and DAUGHTERS are sobbing uncontrollably.

The father lays the boy on the altar; the Priest dons an elaborate piece of headgear.

An assistant lights a FIRE in a bowl and throws some incense into it; another assistant leads a LAMB up front.

The priest sprinkles a few drops of HOLY WATER over the boy, then turns to a statue of Buddha and chants. He raises his hands to Buddha and says a prayer, then turns and faces the congregation with upraised hands; they repeat the prayer.

The lamb is led before the statue of Buddha and one of the assistants takes out a KNIFE.

Strange notices a boy of about 13 with a quiver of arrows nearby. The arrows are just like the one that's in the injured boy's chest. Strange takes one out and examines the arrowhead---it's stone, tied to the shaft; certainly not something that would make a clean wound.

The Priest approaches the boy, his hands hovering near the arrow, ready to grasp it.

Strange reacts with horror as he realizes what's going on: the lamb is going to be sacrificed while the priest tries to pull out the arrow.

STRANGE
STOP! STOP!!!

He rushes up to the dais. The proceedings stop out of amazement rather than from any understanding.

STRANGE
You can't just pull that arrow out! You could puncture his lung, or a vein! You'll kill him!

No one understands. The Priest tells his assistants to restrain Strange. Strange resists.

STRANGE
Dammit, let go of me!

He leafs through the dictionary, muttering to himself, "Doctor, Doctor..." He finds the word, and shouts it, pointing to himself.

STRANGE
(in Nepali)
Doctor! Doctor!

Everyone understands. A buzz goes through the assemblage.

The Priest approaches Strange and addresses him. The meaning is clear: He's asking Strange if he is a doctor.

Strange nods vigorously, repeating the word.

The Priest turns to the father and asks him a question. The father steps up to Dr. Strange and looks into his eyes.

Then he answers the Priest, indicating Dr. Strange, and nodding.

The Priest nods, then gestures to Dr. Strange that he may attend to the boy.

STRANGE
Thank you.

Strange examines him, inspecting the wound, checking his pulse. Strange's old operating room instincts take over.

STRANGE
Water.

There's no response.

STRANGE
Water, please---oh.

He realizes no one understands him, then spots the pitcher of Holy Water. He pours it over his hands, washing them; then he pours it over the wounds.

Now Strange takes the knife for the sacrifice and sterilizes it in the flames for the incense.

He motions the priest over, and shows him that he wants the priest to use a cloth to absorb the blood. The priest understands.

Strange begins the operation, using the knife to enlarge the wound so that he can safely withdraw the arrow.

SERIES OF SHOTS

The FACES of all those involved:

STRANGE, working cautiously, intently.

The FATHER, watching with hope and fear.

The PRIEST, watching Strange, and the operation, soaking up the blood so that Strange can see what he's doing.

The MOTHER, unable to watch.

The PEOPLE in the congregation, watching and praying.

STRANGE

is at last ready for the critical part. He takes a deep breath and slowly, slowly pulls the arrow, whispering to himself.

STRANGE
That's it...easy...stay clear...easy...

He pulls it all the way out, intact and sighs relief.

He holds the arrow up and smiles.

The boy's parents embrace.

CUT TO:

EXT. A VILLAGE STREET - DAY

Strange is bent over his open pack, packing the supplies he has just bought from the "General Store."

As he is tying the pack up, a SHADOW falls across him...and another. Strange looks up.

FOUR VILLAGE MEN (one of whom is the boy's father) have assembled around him.

The LEADER asks him a question in Nepali with gestures, repeating "Nu-ruh-jas?" He is asking Strange if he wants to find The Ancient One.

Strange understands and nods, gesturing that he is going into the mountains to search for "Nu-ruh-jas."

The leader talks and gestures that Strange should come with them.

STRANGE
You're going to take me. Great!

Strange starts to pick up his pack, but immediately, the Father intervenes and takes it for him, smiling with gratitude.

STRANGE
Thank you.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - TO THE MONASTERY

IN THE FOOTHILLS: the Leader takes the group up an incline, into a narrow pass. There are no animals; the men carry the supplies on their backs. Dr. Strange has his belongings carried for him.

ALONG A LEDGE: In a higher elevation, the group winds along a narrow ledge. There are a few scattered patches of snow.

IN THE MOUNTAINS: Two of the Nepalis push a large, flat rock sideways, revealing a CAVE behind it. They all enter the cave.

AT THE CAVE EXIT: The men come out of the cave on the other side of the mountain and continue along another ledge.

EXT. AT THE EDGE OF A CLIFF - DAY

The group arrives at the edge of a cliff, facing a formidable chasm. There's apparently nowhere to go. The leader blows on a Yak horn, producing a high-pitched SOUND...and a DRAWBRIDGE descends from the opposite cliff.

Strange watches in amazement.

The bridge falls into place. On the opposite side stand TWO MONKS with shaved heads, wearing brown robes.

The Leader turns to Dr. Strange, talks, gesturing that this is as far as they go, but that the Monks will take Strange the rest of the way.

The father gives Strange his pack. Strange shakes hands with all of them, shoulders his pack and sets off across the bridge.

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE BRIDGE

Strange approaches the two monks.

STRANGE
I seek Nu-Ruh-jas.

One monk nods and gestures for Strange to follow him. Strange waves to his companions across the chasm. Then the 2nd monk turns a heavy crank to raise the bridge back up.

A MOUNTAIN PASS - DAY

Strange follows the first monk through a pass, around a bend, where revealed to them is

A MONASTERY IN A VALLEY.

The building is old, big and impressive. Its walls are of hand-made bricks; the small windows have shutters, and its roof line is not unlike a pagoda.

A garden, off to one side, has a 4-foot statue of ABAR-MU.

Strange and the monk approach the entrance. Strange pulls out his dictionary.

MONASTERY ENTRANCE - DAY

As they reach the entrance, they are met by an older, more important monk, named ISHROM. The younger monk bows to Ishrom, who returns the bow; then younger monk departs.

Strange consults his dictionary, then speaks.

STRANGE
(in Nepali, with subtitle)
I have come to see Nu-ruh-jas.

ISHROM
Of course you have.

Ishrom speaks English with a tinge of a British accent.

STRANGE
You speak English!

ISHROM
I was once a Ghurka, with the British Army.
As to your request: The Ancient One is deep in a trance.

STRANGE
Well, can't you wake him up? This is important.

ISHROM
One must not disturb the Master when he is in an alternate state of consciousness.

STRANGE
Well, how long before he's back to normal?

ISHROM
One cannot say. A day, a week, a month...or a minute. And even then, he must request one's presence.

STRANGE
Look, my friend, I don't think you understand. I've come too far and too long to put up with the run-around---

ISHROM
I know that even in western culture, it is said that "Patience is a virtue." So it is here.
(a beat)
You must be tired, coming "too far and too long." Come, I'll show you to a room.

Strange follows him inside.

INT. MONASTERY - DAY

Ishrom leads Dr. Strange down the halls, pointing out particular rooms.

ISHROM
The monks' quarters...

He indicates a series of doorways to small simple rooms, each with a straw bed, desk and oil lamp. The rooms have no doors.

ISHROM
...Our dining room and kitchen..

A large room, with a long table, simple chairs and stoneware, with the doorway to the kitchen at the opposite end. There is a small gong in a corner.

ISHROM
The library...

Another decent sized room, with a good number of books, most of them old. There are also shelves full of scrolls. TWO MONKS are at tables, studying.

Strange looks, then follows Ishrom further down the hall.

Ahead is an impressive closed rough hewn wooden DOOR. An eerie pulsing GREEN GLOW emanates through the crack under the door: something unusual is going on inside.

STRANGE
What's in there?

ISHROM
The sanctum of The Master.

Strange nods. They move along.

Ahead is another closed door, although not quite as impressive as the Ancient One's.

ISHROM
It would not serve to open this door.
It is the abode of Baron Mordo.

STRANGE
Baron? Somebody important, eh?

ISHROM
"Importance" exists only in the mind.

STRANGE
Right. Confucius.

Ishrom leads him through a door into the last room of the hall.

ISHROM
Your quarters...

INT. STRANGE'S QUARTERS

Simple and utilitarian, like the Monks' quarters, although bigger. There is a straw bed, a simple dresser with a mirror, a desk and a lamp.

Strange drops his pack on the bed.

STRANGE
Very...nice.

ISHROM
We take two meals: morning and evening, at the sound of the gong. Toilet facilities are outside in the back. Feel free to avail yourself of our humble library.

STRANGE
You have anything in English? Kipling maybe?

ISHROM
Alas, no. But we have Joseph Conrad.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Two or three MONKS are at tables, poring over manuscripts.

Strange scans the titles on a shelf. He pulls out a 1967 World Almanac in English and shakes his head.

STRANGE
It's nice to see that you keep up with current events around here.

Now he finds "LORD JIM." He goes over to a table and looks at the monks.

STRANGE
So, what do you here besides read?

No one pays Strange the slightest bit of attention.

STRANGE
That's what I thought.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The evening meal---a simple rice dish. There are 7 Monks, Dr. Strange, and TWO EMPTY SEATS. The one at the end of the table belongs to The Ancient One.

Strange turns to Ishrom, who sits beside him.

STRANGE
Doesn't the Ancient One eat?

ISHROM
The Master does not require food when he is in a state of alternate consciousness.

STRANGE
What about this Baron Mordo? I haven't seen him yet, either.

ISHROM
Mordo is...well, he is simply... well, he is Mordo.

Strange waits a moment, expecting more. There isn't any more.

STRANGE
Right.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange is in bed, asleep.

We hear the creak of a door: someone has entered the room. The SHADOW OF A MAN passes across the floor, and over the sleeping Dr. Strange. The figure is watching Strange.

Now his HAND reaches toward Strange's head. There is a pronounced SCAR on the back of the hand, and a familiar RING with a highly polished jewel---the same mystic ring we saw in the beginning.

The hand hovers over Strange's forehead, and the jewel on the ring GLOWS YELLOW. Strange sleeps obliviously.

After a few seconds, the glow recedes, the hand retracts, and the shadow departs. The person has left the room.

We hold on Strange a moment. He awakens with a start, sits up and looks around.

All is quiet---no, wait...we hear the sound of LOW CHANTING. A single male human voice, in a strange sing-song.

Strange listens a moment, then gets out of bed. He's wearing shorts and T-shirt. He opens the door.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Strange steps out into the hall. The sound of the chanting is louder. Curious, Strange walks quietly down the hall.

The chanting is coming from behind the closed door to Mordo's room, and the orange glow from an oil lamp is visible from underneath the door.

Strange puts his ear to the door and listens.

Now Strange notices the Ancient One's room a short distance down the hall. The same throbbing GREEN GLOW continues. Something is going on in there...but what?

Strange cautiously approaches the closed door. He watches the glow, then puts his ear to the door. He hears nothing.

He thinks a moment, then takes a deep breath and reaches for the door knob. Suddenly, A HAND CLAMPS DOWN ON HIS SHOULDER.

Strange turns: it's ISHROM. He's calm, without emotion.

ISHROM
Patience is a virtue.

Strange smiles weakly.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - MORNING

Strange and the Monks eat in silence; the same two chairs are empty.

Now a FIGURE APPEARS IN THE DOORWAY: MORDO. He is easily 6 feet tall, dark and powerfully built. He has thick black hair and beard, is perhaps 40, with features that suggest slavic heritage. Unlike the simple brown robes of the monks, Mordo wears dark blues, greens, and blacks. Mordo also wears a multi-faceted crystal pendant around his neck, which throws reflections all over the room.

Mordo smiles and nods a greeting to the Monks.

Strange stares at Mordo; Mordo stares at Strange.

STRANGE
You must be Baron Mordo.

MORDO
And you are the American I've heard about...Mr. Strange?

Mordo has a Romanian accent. Strange stands and extends his hand.

STRANGE
DOCTOR Strange.

They shake hands. We see the familiar scar on Mordo's hand...but no ring.

STRANGE
Your English is excellent.

MORDO
In today's world, if one is to be educated, English is a requirement.

A monk named VYLAR, a mousey character with deep-set eyes, pulls Mordo's chair for him. Strange and Mordo both sit down.

STRANGE
They tell me you are a Baron.

MORDO
An honorary title only. I am no more royal than you are.
(a beat)
You must feel frustrated, Dr. Strange. You have come a great distance to see The Ancient One only to find he will not see you.

STRANGE
(throws Ishrom a look)
Patience is a virtue.

MORDO
And boredom is hell. Perhaps I can be of service to you. I have been a pupil of the Ancient One for many years...I hope to someday follow in his venerable footsteps. Perhaps what you require of the Master can be provided by his pupil.

STRANGE
I'll try anything once.

CUT TO:

INT. MORDO'S SANCTUM - DAY

The room is much larger than Strange's, with several tables, littered with aged books and scrolls, as well as items that look like things from an alchemist's lab.. The curtains are drawn, and VYLAR is LIGHTING CANDLES.

MORDO
Thank you, Vylar. That will be all.

Vylar bows and exits.

Strange sits at a table facing Mordo. On the table are two incense burning lamps, 3 mortars with ointments, and several burning candles. Mordo places a crystal ball over one of the candles, and arranges two others.

MORDO
Place your hands on the ball.

Strange does so. Mordo adjusts his position so that his pendant reflects light from the candles into Strange's eyes. Strange flinches.

MORDO
Keep your eyes open and stare at the flame in the ball. Don't let your eyes leave it. Inhale deeply of the incense, in a slow, steady rhythm, and try to clear your mind of thoughts.

Strange stares at the flame and breathes slowly, deeply.

MORDO
I am going to apply ointments to your hands, and do some manipulations on them. Don't resist me. Keep your eyes fixed on the flame. Whatever happens, keep your eyes fixed on the Flame of the Faltine.

Light reflected from Mordo's pendant continues to flash around Strange's eyes.

MORDO (continuing)
We are going to unlock the healing power of your own mind...

CUT TO:

EXT. HALL - DAY

Mordo's closed door opens---Strange steps out, looking at his hands.

STRANGE
I can't say that I feel cured, but we'll know for sure in one minute.

Strange hurries down the hall to his room. Mordo follows him.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM

Strange digs through his belongings and pulls out the "multiplying ball" trick. He places the ball in his right hand and attempts the trick---he succeeds!

Strange can't believe it! He tries it again: he manipulates the balls as well as he ever did. Now he tries the left hand---and succeeds again.

He laughs euphorically.

STRANGE
I'm cured! It's a miracle! Thank you, Mordo! Thank you' I can never repay you for this.

MORDO
Ah, but you can---simply by using your gift wisely. Return to your country, return to the practice of medicine, and help all those with need, just as I have helped you.

STRANGE
I will.

MORDO
Then I have received payment a hundred times over. I leave you now, Dr. Strange, to pack your things, so that you may return to your work.

Mordo bows graciously, then departs.

Strange does the ball trick again. There are tears in his eyes.

CUT TO:

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

Strange is tying his pack together.

Now there is a KNOCK on the door, and ISHROM enters.

ISHROM
The Master requests your presence.

STRANGE
Well, tell him that I appreciate that, but he doesn't need to bother. Mordo cured me, so I'm leaving.

ISHROM
Mordo cured you...?

STRANGE
Right. I'm good as new.

Strange flexes his hands.

ISHROM
Nevertheless, you must still see the Ancient One. It is his wish.

STRANGE
Listen, it's really not necessary.

ISHROM
The Master decides what is necessary.

Strange shrugs and follows Ishrom out.

INT. THE HALL

Strange follows Ishrom down the hall, past Mordo's closed door, to the Ancient One's room. Ishrom knocks gently, then opens the door. He gestures for Strange to go in.

A beat, then Mordo's door opens. Mordo watches as Ishrom closes the door behind Dr. Strange. Mordo is not happy.

INT. THE ANCIENT ONE'S SANCTUM - DAY

The room is big, but stark. A bed, a desk, a table, some candles, and a high backed wooden chair in the middle of the room. A voice calls from the chair.

ANCIENT ONE
Approach me, Doctor Strange.

Strange cautiously approaches the chair, walking around it, revealing

THE ANCIENT ONE seat calmly, hands clasped. He is old, withered, bald, at least 80, with a thin white beard. He wears a simple gray robe. There is an inner strength about him...and something familiar. His single earing is an ANKH, and he wears an AMULET on his chest---the same amulet we saw in the very beginning. In fact, the Ancient One is TIRO, the young pupil from the prologue.

As Strange comes closer, the Ancient One's amulet begins to glow WHITE, brighter and brighter, until it finally bathes Dr. Strange in a nearly blinding beam.

The glow dissolves.

ANCIENT ONE
I am known as Nu-ruh-jas, which means "The Ancient One." I believe you are the one for whom I've been waiting.

Strange is a little intimidated by the old man.

STRANGE
Listen, uh, sir, I appreciate your hospitality. Your people have been very kind. I came in search of a cure for my hands, and I found it.

ANCIENT ONE
I think not.

STRANGE
Oh, I'm cured all right. See, there's a little exercise I do with these balls, which I haven't been able to do until this morning.

ANCIENT ONE
Show me.

Strange takes the trick out of his pocket and proceeds. He fumbles the balls. He tries it again...and fails.

STRANGE
This is crazy! I did it perfectly just a little while ago.

He tries to do it with his left hand. Again, he can't do it.

STRANGE
I don't get this. Unless...
(makes a realization)
That light! You did something to me!

ANCIENT ONE
I allowed you to see the truth.

STRANGE
The truth? You undid the cure! I don't know how---but you undid it! That's the only possible answer!

ANCIENT ONE
It is one of many possible answers.

STRANGE
Look, old man, I'm in no mood to play games. You fix me back. Now.

ANCIENT ONE
We shall talk again tomorrow. Until then, good day.

He closes his eyes.

STRANGE
What do you mean, tomorrow? What's wrong with right now? I'm talking to you, old man! Open your eyes.

ISHROM (O.S.)
The Master will see you again tomorrow.

Strange turns. Ishrom is there with 3 other monks.

ISHROM
You may return to your quarters. I shall call for you again at the appropriate time.

STRANGE
Great.

Strange storms out.

CUT TO:

INT. MORDO'S SANCTUM

Mordo sits at the table, in front of the crystal ball. There are PICTORIAL ECLIPSE CHARTS and an ephemeris spread out in front of him. He wears the RING we saw earlier on his scarred hand, and he rubs it, as he meditates.

MORDO
...hear my plea, oh, exalted one, for I need your advice, your help, your strength...

The door is thrown open and STRANGE rushes in.

STRANGE
Baron Mordo! You must help me!

Mordo is enraged at the interruption and he quickly removes and hides the ring before Strange spots it.

MORDO
You stupid fool! Did you ever hear of knocking?
(regains his composure)
A thousand pardons---I was in a state of intense concentration. Forgive my outburst.

Mordo puts the Eclipse charts in a cabinet, hiding them from view.

STRANGE
No---you're right. I should have knocked, I'm sorry. I was just---

MORDO
Let me guess: The Ancient One returned your hands to their previous state.

STRANGE
That's right. How did you know?

Mordo gestures for Strange to sit down.

MORDO
He can be difficult at times, the Ancient One. I have studied with him, watched him for many years. As he grows old, he wrestles with the spectre of his own mortality. Soon it will be time for him to impart his power to his successor: me. And yet, he has not accepted this thought, that another will have power greater than he...which is understandable, of course.

STRANGE
Of course.

MORDO
Often I have used my power, his teachings, without consulting him... as I did this morning, with you. Clearly, he did not approve of my action.

STRANGE
Dad doesn't want you taking the car out without asking him first.

MORDO
Exactly. Unfortunately, you are the innocent pawn in a matter between master and pupil, and I apologize for that. It is clear to me that you are a worthy man, deserving of a cure. Perhaps it is not so clear to the Master. In any event, I shall cure you once again. Then I beseech you to leave this place immediately. If the Ancient One sees you again, he may choose to make the damage to your hands irreversible, just to spite me.

STRANGE
Aren't you going to get in trouble for this?

MORDO
A scolding perhaps; a reprimand. But I've made my choice. You should at least profit from it.

STRANGE
That's all right with me.

CUT TO:

INT. HALL, STRANGE'S ROOM - DAY

The door opens and Strange steps out, his pack on his back, manipulating the "multiplying balls" between his fingers smoothly and successfully. He's cured, and ready to leave.

Strange moves quickly down the hall toward the way out. He passes the library, then Ishrom comes running out.

ISHROM
Dr. Strange! Wait! Where are you going?

STRANGE
I'm leaving. Going home.

Strange keeps going down the hall. Ishrom follows.

ISHROM
No---you can't leave! Not now!

STRANGE
Look, I'm getting real tired of you people telling me what I can and can't do. I don't care what you say, or what "the master" says. I'm going.

ISHROM
I didn't mean that it's forbidden. I meant that it's impossible.

Strange opens the door to the outside:

A VIOLENT BLIZZARD is in progress. Snow whips through the air, propelled by cold harsh wind---so much of it is stirring around that we can't even see the ground.

Strange can't believe it.

STRANGE
A blizzard! But it's spring!

ISHROM
The mountain weather obeys no rules. It started less than an hour ago.

Strange sighs in disgust.

STRANGE
Dammit.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Strange and the monks are eating in silence. Neither Mordo, nor the Ancient One are here.

Now Mordo enters and reacts with shock upon seeing Strange. His eyes flash in anger.

MORDO
I told you to leave! Are you a fool?

The outburst seems too strong and uncalled for, and Strange is in no mood to put up with it.

STRANGE
I resent that, Baron. We've got weather problems. I'm just going to have to wait.

Mordo looks out the window. Snow is still coming down.

MORDO
But you can't wait---I mean, if the pass is snowed in, it could take weeks.

STRANGE
What would you like me to do, freeze to death?

Mordo glares at him, then exits quickly, without eating.

CUT TO:

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange paces around the room like a caged animal, manipulating his magic balls between his fingers.

He goes past the mirror, then does a double take. He moves in front of the mirror and does the trick, watching:

Although his real hand does the trick perfectly, the REFLECTED IMAGE SHOWS THAT HE IS NOT DOING THE TRICK AT ALL! He is merely holding the ball and shells between his thumb and index finger as he waves his hand around.

Strange stares in disbelief. He does it again and again, with both right and left hand, but the result is the same: the reflected image shows that he is not doing the trick, even though he sees his real hand doing it successfully.

STRANGE
What in the hell is going on here...?

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Strange comes out of his room and goes down the hall to Mordo's closed door. He is about to knock---instead he stops and listens, putting his ear to the door.

Mordo is chanting in some strange language. One word is repeated several times: "Dormammu."

Strange steps back from the door and looks up at the gap against the ceiling: a THROBBING ORANGE GLOW can be seen.

There's something spooky going on here, and Strange decides not to pursue it. He backs off, then returns to his room.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange is asleep in bed.

INT. HALL - NIGHT

Mordo's door is still closed; the chanting and orange glow continue. Now, GREEN SMOKE comes out from under the door in a single, coherent trail, not unlike cigarette smoke.

The smoke winds along the hall floor like a snake, to Strange's closed door, and underneath, into Strange's room. The trail of smoke is perhaps 12 feet long...then there is no more.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

The smoke glides along the floor, over to the bed, then up, along Strange's sleeping form, and around his face and nose. Strange inhales the smoke.

A beat, then Strange awakens, as if in a trance, his eyes more closed than open. He slowly gets out of bed, moving as if his body were not under his own control. He goes to the dresser and picks up his KNIFE. Grasping it with both hands, he positions it in front of his own neck: he's going to stab himself!

Suddenly, Strange's eyes open all the way. He reacts in horror: his conscious self realizes what's going on. He tries to lower the knife, but he can't---his body is possessed, under outside control. He struggles against himself, his hands shaking as he tries to fight the impulse to stab himself.

Now another waft of green smoke snakes in under the door. It winds around Strange's feet and spirals around him, moving slowly, inevitably toward his face.

Strange realizes the danger and tries to move away, but the smoke stays on its path. He tries to blow it away, but to no avail. It reaches his neck and moves up around his chin, around his mouth and nostrils. Strange holds his breath, but it looks like a losing battle---between the knife and the smoke, he can't hold out.

Finally, he must breathe---the smoke enters his nostrils. His eyes start to close...the knife moves closer...

Suddenly, he's bathed in an intense WHITE GLOW. The smoke is dispelled and Strange drops the knife: he's normal again.

He turns: THE ANCIENT ONE stands in the open doorway; the white glow came from his amulet.

Strange doesn't know what to think, what to say.

The Ancient One doesn't give him any time. He turns and walks purposefully down the hall.

Strange follows him to Mordo's room.

The Ancient One throws open the door.

INT. MORDO'S ROOM

Mordo is in the middle of an incantation over a burning flame where green smoke spirals out. He reacts with surprise and fear upon seeing the Ancient One.

MORDO
Master! I didn't---I---what a surprise...!

ANCIENT ONE
The charade is over, Mordo. You believe you can attempt base murder within the walls of my own monastery?

MORDO
No! It wasn't murder! I was trying to save you, oh Master, from the westerner. He came to usurp your power, to pretend to be the chosen disciple, to turn you against me! I was trying to save you from him!

ANCIENT ONE
Lies, Mordo. Pathetic lies. You have at last revealed your true nature. You have proclaimed clearly and loudly what I had always suspected, and what I hoped might change under my influence. But I have failed with you. You are unfit to be my disciple...you always were. Now, leave this place. Get out of my sight.

MORDO
But, Master, how can I leave? The blizzard...

ANCIENT ONE
There was no blizzard. It was a simple illusion.

The Ancient One opens the curtain, revealing a calm, clear night, without even a hint of snow on the ground.

MORDO
Curse me for a novice. It was all a ploy...to draw me out.

Mordo points an accusing finger at Dr. Strange.

MORDO
This is all your fault, Strange! If you hadn't come, I could have inherited the power. I would have become the Master. You'll pay for my disgrace, I swear it on the book of the Vishanti!
(to The Ancient One)
And so will you, Old Man! Now, since the lines have been drawn, let me show you how I've played you for the fool!

Mordo reaches into his garment and reveals the RING. He puts it on his finger.

ANCIENT ONE
Then it was no "accident" that killed my first disciple---it was you. You stole the Ring of Raggadorr from him and came here to learn its secrets.

MORDO
I HAVE learned its secrets. Now, your power grows weak while my skill improves. We'll meet again...on my terms.

Mordo's ring glows BLUE. He makes a circular move with his hand, drawing a BLUE GLOWING ELIPSE in the air---a dimensional rift, literally, a hole in reality. Mordo steps through the it, and the hole disappears. There isn't a trace of him left.

Strange stares in open mouthed amazement.

The Ancient One seems saddened. He turns to Dr. Strange.

ANCIENT ONE
I'm afraid you've just made a very powerful enemy.

STRANGE
What the hell is going on around here?

ANCIENT ONE
You have come seeking a cure...but that is not why you are here.

STRANGE
Come again?

ANCIENT ONE
I believe you to be the chosen one... chosen by powers far beyond my understanding. I did not know who you would be or why it would be you. I only knew you would come.

STRANGE
Look, I think you've got me confused with somebody else.

ANCIENT ONE
Stephen Strange, Doctor of Medicine, Heart Surgeon---former Heart Surgeon. Columbia University Medical School Class of 1971. Your red Maserati had New York plate 193-XBN. Your mother's maiden name was Bonner, your favorite dish is linguini with pesto sauce.

STRANGE
How do you know all that?

ANCIENT ONE
"There are more things in heaven and earth..."
Mordo's cure for your hands was a hypnotic trick. In the mirror, you could see the truth. Now give me your hands.

Strange puts his hands on the Ancient One's. The Ancient One closes his eyes; his amulet glows and bathes Strange in a white light which then quickly runs through the entire color spectrum. Then, it ends abruptly.

Strange flexes his hands.

STRANGE
You cured me! For the first time, I can actually feel it!

He runs back to his room.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange pulls out the ball trick and performs it flawlessly. He does it in the mirror, and the image and reality are in sync. Dr. Strange is cured.

The Ancient One re-enters.

ANCIENT ONE
You're free to go, Dr. Strange. Free to return to New York, and pick up the pieces of your life...if you so choose.

STRANGE
Or...?

ANCIENT ONE
Or stay...and help me. I am old, my powers weaken, and I am in dire need of a successor...
(looks off into space)
For I fear humanity may be about to face its greatest danger in seven centuries.

Strange looks at the Ancient One, then looks at his hands. He's thinking.

CUT TO:

EXT. MONASTERY GARDEN - DAY

Strange and the Ancient One walk together through the garden, past the statue of Aban-Ma.

STRANGE
So what you're trying to tell me is it's magic, right? Real, actual magic... the stuff that we westerners are too smart to believe in. And that jewel--- the amulet---it's some sort of philosopher's stone which gives you your powers.

ANCIENT ONE
Magic. To think that you, college educated, a doctor, a man of the 20th century...to think that you believe in magic...

STRANGE
Well, I sure don't know how else to explain what I've seen.

ANCIENT ONE
(chuckles)
Magic is simply a word to describe that which we cannot explain.
Consider: A voice comes out of a box. An aborigine calls it magic. You call it radio. You push a button and there is light. Magic...or electricity? Swallow a pill and pain goes away. Magic...or medicine?
You've experienced things you don't understand, so you call it magic. It is no more magic than radio, electricity or aspirin.
Your science teaches correctly that a normal man only uses ten to fifteen percent of his total brain capacity. I am able to use over 50 percent of mine. This allows me to do things that you call "magic."
As for the Amulet of Agamotto...
(indicates amulet)
We use our eyes to see...and yet, we can improve upon their power with tools: telescopes, microscopes, eyeglasses. This too is a tool, to aid in the control and focus of abilities here...

He points to his forehead.

ANCIENT ONE (continuing)
I cannot explain the inner workings of this amulet anymore than you can explain the inner workings of your digital watch. But I have studied it, I know how to use it... and I can instruct others in its use.

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S STUDY - DAY

The Ancient One gestures for Strange to sit in a chair facing him.

ANCIENT ONE
In order to unlock the powers of the mind, it is necessary to eliminate distractions...thus, our food here is monotonous because craving particular foods is a distraction. Similarly, our clothing remains the same from day to day... but I digress.

He removes the amulet and puts it on Dr. Strange. The jewel in its center is colorless.

ANCIENT ONE
Focus your mind on strength. Physical strength.

Strange concentrates.

The amulet slowly begins to turn pink.

ANCIENT ONE
Free your mind of all other things and focus only on your strength.

The amulet goes from pink to red.

ANCIENT ONE
Good. The more you concentrate on strength, the redder the amulet will glow.

Indeed, as Strange concentrates, the amulet glows red.

Suddenly, the Ancient One claps his hands in front of Strange's face, startling him.

The amulet immediately returns to its colorless original state.

ANCIENT ONE
My distraction broke your concentration. With practice, you can learn to be aware of distractions without being distracted.
(takes the amulet back and dons it)
Now, let me show you what is possible...

The Ancient One concentrates, and the amulet glows red. Just as we saw in the prologue, the red glow expands and envelops his entire body. He raises his right hand, then snaps it down, aiming at a stone bowl on the table: He fires a bolt of energy which pulverizes the bowl to dust.

Strange is totally astonished. He reaches over and runs his hand through the dust.

ANCIENT ONE
Strength is only one facet of the mind. Let me demonstrate another...

The Ancient One again puts the amulet on Strange.

ANCIENT ONE
Imagine yourself outside of the constraint of your own body. If you can, the amulet will turn green.

Strange concentrates. Nothing happens. He closes his eyes...and then the amulet turns green.

ANCIENT ONE
Excellent. For one with no training, your control is impressive.
Now watch me...

Strange starts to remove the amulet.

ANCIENT ONE
No---leave it on. I am capable of working without it, but you need it in order to see me.

Strange watches as the Ancient One gets into a yoga position, closes his eyes and concentrates. Slowly, his body is enveloped in a green glow, emanating from his "3rd eye." Then, when his body is all aglow, a green ectoplasmic spirit form of the Ancient One separates from the body, and floats around the room.

Strange is totally dumbfounded.

The Ancient One's body remains in a throbbing green glow, frozen and unconscious. The spirit form is lively and conscious, although silent...flying around the room, looking at Dr. Strange, then flying through one wall, disapearing into the next room, and reappearing through another wall.

The spirit rejoins the body; the glow subsides, and the Ancient One opens his eyes.

Strange's mouth is agape in awe.

ANCIENT ONE
I believe you in the west call that "Astral Projection." It is the power of vision---for the spirit can see far beyond the limit of the body. There are limitations, of course. The spirit can only observe the physical world, not affect or communicate with it. And to be separated from the physical being for more than one hour will destroy the bond between body and spirit.

STRANGE
Meaning that if you stay out of your body for over an hour you can never get back in?

ANCIENT ONE
Never. The physical self will then die, and without that link, the spirit will die too. But during that hour, the body is completely indestructible.

EXT. IN THE MOUNTAINS - DUSK

Strange and the Ancient One walk together along a mountain path with a glorious sunset behind them.

STRANGE
When I first arrived here, there was a green glow from under your door. You were...outside of your body?

The Ancient One nods.

ANCIENT ONE
For a long time I have been on a search...for a successor.

STRANGE
Baron Mordo said he was going to be your successor.

ANCIENT ONE
Mordo is evil. I allowed him to believe that so he would stay here. I felt that it was better to keep an eye on him than to let him run wild. I had also hoped that I might be able to change him. I'm embarrassed to admit that with all my power, I never fathomed how truly insidious he was. 20 years ago I could have... but today my power is not what it used to be. This is why I've been desperate to find a successor.

He sighs, then looks off into the mountains thoughtfully.

ANCIENT ONE (continuing)
I had a disciple, a young man from Britain, a man of great goodness. I trained him, and sent him out into the world on a quest. A fatal accident befell him---or so I thought. Now I learn that Mordo killed him.

STRANGE
You need a successor...to do what?

ANCIENT ONE
As a physician, you work to maintain human bodies by keeping them in balance. My work is similar, but on a spiritual plane. Just as you fight unseen forces called disease, so do I combat unseen forces that exist in other dimensions...on alternate planes of reality...forces that threaten mankind on a spiritual level. When the mantle was passed to me, my master told me that I was now The Protector...the guardian of all humanity.

Strange isn't sure how to take all of this.

ANCIENT ONE
I am aware how all this must sound to a man of your background, Stephen Strange...but imagine yourself trying to explain the concept of bacteria to the family of the boy you saved in the village down there.

The Ancient One gestures out toward the distant village.

Strange looks down there, looks up at the moon and the stars coming out, then turns to the Ancient One. But the older man gestures for Strange not to speak.

ANCIENT ONE
Make no judgements. Sit alone awhile... under the universe, and ponder that one question that man has always asked himself: Why?

Strange sits. The Ancient One walks off, leaving him there. Strange looks up.

EXT. EXTREME WIDE ANGLE - NIGHT

Strange sits silhouetted in silence against the spectacular starry night sky. We hold, then

CUT TO:

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S ROOM - DAY

The Ancient One sits at his desk, studying an ancient scroll. Strange enters, pulls up a chair and looks him straight in the eye.

STRANGE
So, tell me: Why? And why me?

ANCIENT ONE
Why you, as opposed to someone else? You're here, and you're needed. Obviously, you have certain qualities: your persistance, your endurance, your refusal to accept defeat...and the inner desire to help humanity which led you to become a doctor.
But why, beyond that?
(shrugs)
These things are as great a mystery to me as they are to you.
I don't know why, Dr. Strange.

STRANGE
"I don't know's" not good enough. What if I decided to leave---to go back to surgery. I had a pretty good life.

ANCIENT ONE
Yes, you had it all. And you lost it all. Perhaps you could have it all again. But why? Why taste the fruit again and again when there are so many others in the garden?

Strange thinks, then sighs.

STRANGE
I don't know.

The Ancient One smiles. Then Strange realizes what he's just said and chuckles.

STRANGE
I couldn't go back...not after what I've seen.

ANCIENT ONE
I know.

Strange looks at the Ancient One for a long moment.

STRANGE
Teach me...please...?

The Ancient One nods.

ANCIENT ONE
Let us begin. There is much to learn...and little time.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON THE AMULET

as it is placed on Dr. Strange.

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S STUDY - DAY

The Ancient One has placed it upon Dr. Strange: another lesson is to begin.

ANCIENT ONE
Think of a place...a specific place you are familiar with...your old hospital, for example. Concentrate on it.

Strange does. The amulet glows BLUE.

ANCIENT ONE
Blue...the color of movement. Good.

Strange relaxes. The blue fades.

ANCIENT ONE
But how does one move to another place? Our physical world consists of 3 dimensions. In order to move from one place to another, we are confined to these 3 dimensions. But there are other dimensions available which can simplify matters.

The Ancient One takes a piece of parchment off the desk.

ANCIENT ONE
Consider this paper as a 2-dimensional world. If our universe was restricted to 2 dimensions, we could only get from one corner to the other by travelling across its entire length.
But by using 3 dimensional space, it is possible to put any point on the surface adjacent to any other point...

He demonstrates by bending the corner and touching it to the opposite corner.

ANCIENT ONE (continuing)
...thus making the distance between them non-existant.
Now, watch what is possible by going beyond 3 dimensions...

The Ancient One concentrates...and glows blue. He stands, and gestures with his hand, drawing a BLUE GLOWING HOLE in mid-air---a dimensional rift. He steps through the rift, vanishing into it, and it seals shut behind him.

At the same moment, another BLUE GLOWING RIFT appears on the opposite end of the room, and the Ancient One steps through it, as if he had gone through one side of a door and come out the other.

Dr. Strange stares in wide-eyed amazement.

The blue glow subsides.

ANCIENT ONE
It is a wonderous ability...but physically taxing, and dangerous. If you cannot visualize your destination, if you're unfamiliar with it, you may end up somewhere else, as if you folded the scroll in the wrong place.

He uses the parchment to illustrate his words.

STRANGE
But couldn't you send your spirit self there first, familiarize the mind, and then bring the body?

ANCIENT ONE
(nods)
Very astute.
These then are the primaries: red, green, blue. Strength, vision, movement. They are the tools for dealing with the physical universe. Only one ability can be used at a time, since the mind cannot fully concentrate on two things at once. The secondaries are for dealing with the inner nature of others--- hypnotism, healing, and telepathy. But there is no time for you to learn these other powers. I fear there will not even be enough time for you to master the primaries. We haven't a moment to waste:
Your training begins...

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS - TRAINING SEQUENCE

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S SANCTUM - DAY

DR. STRANGE, now dressed in simple eastern garb, sits, intensely concentrating to make the amulet glow RED. The ANCIENT ONE, behind him, claps his hands, trying to break his pupil's concentration. Strange doesn't flinch.

EXT. MONASTERY - DAY

Dr. Strange goes JOGGING.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange sits in a yoga position, concentrating, the amulet glowing GREEN. The green aura envelops him, and his spirit form attempts to separate from his body...but can't quite make it.

EXT. MONASTERY GARDEN - DAY

The Ancient One explains to Strange the significance of the statue of Abar-Mu.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange practices the "BLUE" mode: He creates a small blue hole and sticks his hand through it. The hand appears 5 feet across the room, coming through "the other end."

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - PREDAWN

Strange is sleeping. The Ancient One enters and awakens him. Strange squints, gives him a look, then turns over: he'd rather sleep. But the Ancient One opens the window and throws the blanket off him: there's no time for extra sleep.

EXT. BEHIND THE MONASTERY - DAY

Strange practices the RED mode. Surrounded by a red aura, he hurls a red energy bolt at a wooden chair. The bolt moves slowly, and only knocks the chair over.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange practices the "GREEN" mode again. This time his spirit form successfully separates from his body, flies through the ceiling, then returns.

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S SANCTUM - NIGHT

Strange and the Ancient One study a scroll together by candlelight.

INT. STRANGE'S ROOM - DAY

Strange again experiments in "BLUE." Now he is able to create a much larger dimensional portal. As he steps through it, a blue glow appears in his window. Strange comes through the dimensional rift---and falls to the floor!

EXT. THE GARDEN - DAY

Strange borrows a page from the western gunfighter: he has set up a row of bottles and cans on a fence. Now he glows with red energy, makes a "gun" with his index finger and thumb, and BLASTS each object to nothingness.

His last "shot" goes wild and destroys the statue of Abar-Mu---except a solid object is left in its wake: the other half of SKULKANE.

Witnessing this are ISHROM, working in the garden, and VYLAR, who is chopping firewood. Ishrom moves closer to see what has happened; Vylar goes into the Monastery.

Strange rushes over, distressed over the damage he's caused. Now he spots Skulkane. He examines it curiously, not sure what it is.

He feels it, and tests it, trying to bend it. Of course, he can't.

As Strange tries to figure it out, behind him we see a BLUE GLOW appear. From this dimensional rift leaps a large WOLF with RED EYES, and salivating greenish slime. It GROWLS.

Strange backs away, concerned and confused...as does Ishrom.

The animal SNARLS, circling Strange. Strange is uneasy...on edge. Now a SECOND WOLF jumps out of the blue glow.

STRANGE
(quietly, to Ishrom)
Get the Master.

Ishrom nods and quickly makes his way into the monastery.

And now a human figure steps out of the dimensional portal: BARON MORDO. He is confident, wearing his true evil nature with pride. His clothes are different---a dark green tunic with a high black collar, long black gloves, and flowing black cape. His ring glows blue. He cuts a dynamic, powerful figure with the second wolf beside him.

STRANGE
Baron Mordo...!

Mordo smiles slightly, then calmly gives an order to the first wolf.

MORDO
Kill him, my pet.

Immediately, the wolf leaps at Strange, going for his right arm. The attack knocks Skulkane from Strange's hand.

Strange falls, struggling with the wolf, fighting to keep its jaws away from him. Strange's amulet starts to glow red, but only intermitently---Strange can't mentally concentrate under the ferociousness of the attack. All he can do is fight physically.

Mordo smiles, enjoying this. He steps over and picks up Skulkane.

Now the ANCIENT ONE comes out, followed by Ishrom. They are astonished to see Mordo.

MORDO
It appears that your new pupil needs to practice his concentration.

The Ancient One sees Strange's plight and immediately goes into action. A red glow emanates from his "third eye" as he prepares for battle; red energy engulfs him and he hurls a bolt of power at the wolf and vaporizes it.

Strange is out of breath, bruised, but all right.

MORDO
Look what I've got here, old one...

Mordo holds up the half of Skulkane. The Ancient One is horrified.

MORDO
Catch it and it's yours.

He throws it straight up in the air.

The Ancient One looks up, watching it.

STRANGE
Master---look out!

Too late---the second wolf leaps on the Ancient One from behind, knocking him hard to the ground.

Mordo catches Skulkane and laughs.

MORDO
Farewell, fools!

Mordo's ring glows BLUE and he again creates a dimensional portal. He escapes.

The Ancient One struggles against the wolf, whose jaws are clamped on his shoulder.

Strange climbs to his feet, and concentrates. The amulet glows red...the red energy engulfs him... he raises his arm and strikes.

His aim is true---the red energy bolt disintegrates the wolf.

Strange returns to normal and rushes over to his bleeding mentor.

ANCIENT ONE
I am ashamed. I forgot my own lesson.
I allowed myself to be distracted.

Strange examines the wound.

STRANGE
Your wound is serious. Can you use
your power to heal yourself?

ANCIENT ONE
Regrettably, no. One cannot heal oneself.

STRANGE
Well, I can still use my power as a doctor.

CUT TO:

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S ROOM - DAY

The Ancient One lies in bed. Strange is bandaging his shoulder wound. The old man is in a state of semi-consciousness; Ishrom, Vylar and 2 other monks stand nearby, watching.

Strange covers the Ancient One with blankets.

STRANGE
(to Ishrom and the others)
The sudden shock of the attack was worse than the wound itself. He needs rest, so he's not to leave this bed. Over-exertion could have grave consequences. How old is he, anyway?

ISHROM
Over 700 years.

Strange takes a moment to try to deal with that.

STRANGE
I don't even know what to say to that.

Now the Ancient One moans. Strange turns. The old man is weak, he has trouble talking.

ANCIENT ONE
My son, the danger is great.

STRANGE
I know, but you're going to be all right.

ANCIENT ONE
Not me. The world. Mordo took Skulkane...

STRANGE
(doesn't understand)
He took what?
(to Ishrom)
What's he talking about?

ANCIENT ONE
Dormammu.

Ishrom reacts with grave concern.

CUT TO:

INT. LIBRARY - NIGHT

Ishrom is reading to Strange from an aged parchment.

ISHROM
(reading)
"...Skulkane's purpose was twofold: first, to unlock the doorway to the dark dimension, allowing Dormammu to pass through; and second, to act as a conduit of mystic energy which would allow Dormammu to stay once he arrived. But because Skulkane had been created by the power of Dormammu, only the power of Dormammu could destroy it. Thus with our combined power we were only able to break it in two. The one half I threw into the sea. The other I hid in a place known only to me..."

Strange takes a look at the parchment. There is a hand-drawn picture of the two halves of Skulkane.

Suddenly Strange recognizes the other half.

STRANGE
This---I've seen this! I saw it...
(trying to remember)
Where? Where was it...?

CUT TO:

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Strange kneels beside the Ancient One and puts his hand to his forehead. The old man stirs and opens his eyes.

STRANGE
Master: Fate does indeed have its ways. I have seen the other half of Skulkane in New York. In a way, it led to the accident which began my quest. I'll get it, and bring it back.

ANCIENT ONE
Beware, my son. You are still a novice while Mordo is powerful and skilled. He may have divined the location of Shulkane from your mind when you allowed him to "cure" you.

STRANGE
Look, you just rest. Conserve your strength. If I need your help...

ANCIENT ONE
You can contact me from your sanctum in Greenwich Village.

STRANGE
My sanctum in Greenwich Village? I don't have a place in Greenwich---

Strange stops short, suddenly remembering that he has.

STRANGE
You mean that brownstone I bought on... "impulse" was...

ANCIENT ONE
"There are more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in your philosophy."
Go now, my son. Great is Dormammu's hunger for human souls, and the next eclipse is less than two weeks away. If Mordo succeeds, mankind will be reduced to red-eyed savages, existing only to kill one another in Dormammu's name.

Strange nods, then turns and concentrates. The amulet glows BLUE. Strange creates a dimensional portal for himself and steps through it.

CUT TO:

EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE - DAY

On the street in front of the Greenwich Village Brownstone, New Yorkers go about their daily business.

Now a BLUE GLOW appears in the middle of the street as the dimensional portal forms---and DR. STRANGE steps out into the middle of the street---a bizarre sight in his eastern robes.

Immediately, we hear TIRES SCREECH and HORNS HONK as cars suddenly swerve to avoid hitting Dr. Strange! Strange quickly darts to the sidewalk.

Motorists curse and scream at Strange and one another; all have luckily escaped injury.

STRANGE
Sorry.

In moments, traffic resumes as before.

Strange looks around, as if not quite believing he's back in New York City.

EXT. GREENWICH BROWNSTONE

As Strange gingerly approaches "his" brownstone, the door opens and out steps the same ORIENTAL MAN who told Strange of the Ancient One. His name is WONG.

WONG
Welcome home, Dr. Strange. We haven't been formerly introduced. My name is Wong. I hope you will allow me the honor of tending to your personal needs: food, clothing, cleaning...

Strange is still a bit taken aback by everything.

STRANGE
Sure...why not...?
(hesitantly)
Wong. Have you always lived here?

Wong nods.

STRANGE
And you know who I am...what I am.

WONG
Of course.

STRANGE
Then my buying this place, and you telling me about the Ancient One, and then the rent money coming in just when I needed it...wasn't just a coincidence...?

WONG
Some believe in coincidence. Others believe that all things happen for a reason. I know only that we are both here now, and that there is great work to be done.
Please, come inside. Rest awhile--- travelling is draining. Allow me to prepare you a meal. It is not wise to battle the forces of evil on an empty stomach.

Strange accompanies Wong inside.

STRANGE
Wong, I like your philosophy.

CUT TO:

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

Strange finishes up a plate of linguini with pesto sauce.

STRANGE
Delicious, Wong. Absolutely delicious.
(wipes his mouth, stands)
Well, I guess it's time...

WONG
Not yet.

STRANGE
Excuse me?

WONG
It's your clothes. They may be appropriate for a monastery, but in New York? No, you need something to set yourself apart from the ordinary, yet with a style befitting a practioner of the mystic arts.

STRANGE
And I have the strangest feeling that these clothes are upstairs in my closet.

Wong smiles and bows.

CUT TO:

EXT. BYRNE MANSION, WESTCHESTER - DAY

The home of Helene Byrne looks just as it did before: impressive.

A blue glow appears in the circle drive, and Dr. Strange steps out of it. He looks quite formidable in his new outfit---a blue tunic with billowy sleeves and a high collar, tied around his waist with an orange sash. His fitted pants are dark blue, tucked into european style black leather boots.

Strange looks around, as if making sure he's really here, still getting used to his new mode of travel.

He rings the doorbell. In a moment, HELENE opens it.

STRANGE
Hello, Helene.

It takes her a moment to recognize him.

HELENE
Stephen? Stephen Strange...I don't believe it. What happened to you? Say, nice outfit! Who's the designer?

STRANGE
It's a long story. Everything's a long story. Helene, this is very important. The last time I saw you---here, at a party, a year, two years ago---you had just bought an artifact. You weren't sure what it was---

HELENE
I sold it.

STRANGE
The black curved thing that was sort of---

HELENE
Yes, I sold it.

STRANGE
To who? I've got to find it.

HELENE
Let me see, her name was...what was her name? She had red hair...

Strange reacts. His memory is jarred.

STRANGE
Red hair, green eyes, about five foot seven, striking features, and a British accent.

HELENE
Then you know her.

STRANGE
I saw her once. Here. I've never forgotten her. But I don't know her.

HELENE
She's an antique dealer of some sort. Wouldn't leave me alone about selling that piece---she had to have it. Said it had to do with a family matter. Finally she offered double what I paid. The funny thing was, I'd been having the strangest nightmares---about creatures with red eyes trying to break into my house. They seemed so real. After I sold it to her, they stopped.
I think I have her card...

CUT TO:

INSERT - BUSINESS CARD

Strange's hand holds the card. It reads "Liana Montaine, Broker of Rare Antiques" with a phone number. The hand turns it over. There is a handwritten address: "454 W. 93rd, Apt. 4-J."

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Strange checks the address on the card against the apartment number on the door: 4-J. This is it. Strange rings the buzzer.

In a moment the door opens. LIANA is as stunningly gorgeous as when Strange last saw her.

LIANA
Yes?

STRANGE
Good evening. My name is Strange. Dr. Stephen Strange. I'm an expert in the occult. I believe you have something of great interest to me.

She looks at him a moment.

LIANA
Skulkane?

Strange is surprised she knows the name. She smiles.

LIANA
Come in. I've been expecting you.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON A WINE GLASS

as red wine is poured into it.

WIDER - INT. LIANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liana hands the glass to Dr. Strange. As she talks she pours one for herself.

LIANA
I had heard the legend of Skulkane from my brother who had an intense fascination with mysticism. I never quite believed it...until I saw it.

STRANGE
At a party...about a year and a half ago.

She stops short and looks at him curiously, wondering how he knows this.

STRANGE
We met there---or rather, I tried to pick you up. You ran off.

LIANA
(remembering)
I vaguely remember a rather forward man... That was you?

Strange nods. She looks at him with interest.

LIANA
You seem to have changed.

STRANGE
For the better, I hope. I've seen a lot since then...questioned a lot... and learned a lot. I'm glad it shows.

She looks at him with a mixture of doubt and confusion.

STRANGE
What's wrong? You seem...disappointed.

LIANA
No, well, I guess I was expecting---
(a beat)
I don't know what I was expecting.

She takes a moment. She genuinely seems disturbed. She downs all of her wine and sighs.

LIANA
We were discussing Skulkane. I saw it, and I had to have it, for two reasons. First, just to have it, like wanting to have any rare object. And secondly, because having it might bring me into contact with people of great spiritual power... who knew things and secrets I hoped they might share with me. Perhaps... someone like you, Dr. Strange.

Her interest in Strange seems a bit more than academic, and Strange responds to it.

STRANGE
Call me Stephen.

LIANA
Someone like you, Stephen.

She moves closer. Strange resists the urge to take advantage of the situation.

STRANGE
Liana, your having Skulkane puts you into grave danger from...who knows what.

LIANA
I know. That's why I don't have it.

STRANGE
You don't have it? Then where is it?

She looks into his eyes for a long moment.

LIANA
The location is in my consciousness now.

STRANGE
Liana, this is very serious. It's no time to be playing games.

LIANA
Then...you can't pick up my thoughts?

STRANGE
No.

Her demeanor becomes more hard edged, suspicious.

LIANA
Then who's playing games with who, Dr. Strange? You claim to be practiced in the mystic arts, a disciple of Nu-ruh-jas, yet you're incapble of a simple telepathic demonstration?

STRANGE
(sighs, slightly embarassed)
I'm afraid I don't know how to do that yet. You see, I'm new at this.

LIANA
Either that, or a fake. What about healing? Can you make this bruise go away?

She shows him a small bruise on her elbow.

STRANGE
No, I haven't learned healing, either. But---

LIANA
Well, what can you do? Levitation? Astral projection? Telekinesis---

STRANGE
Yes. I'm quite capable of Astral projection. Would you like a demonstration?

LIANA
If you don't mind. I have to be sure, you understand.

STRANGE
Certainly.

LIANA
I have an office on the 16th floor of the Wentworth Building, on Lexington near 53rd. I want you to tell me what's hanging on the walls, what kind of furniture there is, the color of my phone, and what's on my desk.

STRANGE
Walls, furniture, phone, desk.

Strange looks at the clock: it's 7:35.

STRANGE
Shouldn't take more than 10 minutes.

Strange sits in the yoga position, then closes his eyes. His amulet glows green...and in moments, the green glow engulfs his entire body.

Liana watches, fascinated.

Now, Dr. Strange's spirit form floats out of his mortal body. Liana, of course, cannot see this---she just stares at his body. The green glow around it begins to pulse, as if tied to a slow, steady heartbeat.

Strange's ethereal form waves his hand in front of her face. She's completely oblivious to it.

Now the spirit Strange flies through the wall, outside.

EXT. LIANA'S APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

Unencumbered by the laws of physics, Dr. Strange flies past the apartment building and low along the streets of Manhattan, keeping a few feet above the traffic.

He passes a street sign denoting "Lexington Avenue" and turns, whisking off into the distance.

EXT. WENTWORTH BUILDING - NIGHT

Strange drops to the ground on Lexington, in front of the Wentworth office building---in fact, dropping too far: his spirit begins to fall through the street! Strange raises himself to street level. Traffic passes right through him as he "stands" there to make sure he's at the right place.

Satisfied, he flies up along the exterior of the building and passes through the wall inside.

INT. LIANA'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Dr. Strange steps through the wall, into the office. A nameplate on the desk reads "Liana Montaine."

Strange looks around. On the walls have been hung a variety of CROSSBOWS, old and new.

The furnishings are ART DECO, and the telephone is WHITE.

As Strange floats over to peruse the desk, the phone rings, we hear an electronic BEEP, and an answering machine goes off. We hear LIANA'S VOICE.

LIANA (V.O. tape)
Greetings, Dr. Strange. The masquerade is over. I know you killed my brother and took his place as the disciple of Nu-ruh-jas. The circle is now complete: he is avenged.

Strange isn't quite sure what to make of this, but he reacts with concern---then flies back out through the wall.

The digital clock in the office reads 7:41.

CUT TO:

INT. LIANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Strange's spirit form flies in through the wall...but the apartment is empty. Not only is Liana gone, but more seriously, Strange's body is missing. The chair where he sat is empty.

The ethereal Strange reacts with shock.

The clock reads 7:46.

Strange checks the bedroom and the bathroom---both are empty.

Now the front door opens and MORDO ENTERS with a triumphant expression. He can't see Strange, but he walks around the apartment, talking to the walls.

MORDO
Hello, Strange. I know you're here, somewhere. But where is your body? It's hidden...it could be anywhere. And if you can't find it by 8:35, you're finished.
(laughs)
I can't believe how easy this was--- you're truly the most worthless adversary I've ever had. Liana's brother was at least a challenge to kill. He had some intelligence. Even Liana wasn't as gullible as you...but after I slept with her a few times, why, she begged me to take Skulkane.

Strange is particularly incensed by this.

LIANA (O.S.)
You talk too much, Mordo.

Mordo turns: LIANA is standing in the doorway.

MORDO
What are you doing here?

LIANA
Call it woman's intuition. I just couldn't believe in my heart that Strange was capable of murder.
(calls to the room)
Stephen, I'm sorry! Mordo's thugs threw your body in their car but I don't know where they're taking it---

MORDO
Silence!

Mordo slugs her in the face---she falls to the floor unconcious.

MORDO
Well, Strange, now you know your body's in a car. Unfortunately for you, there are at least a million cars in New York.

He laughs, then his ring glows BLUE, and he creates a dimensional portal. He goes through it, leaving Liana unconscious on the floor.

Strange flies through a wall, past a clock showing 7:48.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING - NIGHT

STRANGE'S SPIRIT FORM emerges from the roof and flies a little higher. He looks down: A steady stream of traffic flows on the streets below.

Strange looks in the opposite direction. Again, he is confronted by the sight of hundreds of cars travelling in all directions.

Strange's expression is grave. Finding a needle in a haystack would be easier.

THE SPIRIT DR. STRANGE

flies along 6th Avenue, looking over cars. The volume of traffic is intimidating.

He passes a digital clock display on a bank: it's now 8:01. He shakes his head in frustration. Trial and error seems hopeless.

Now Strange glides past a traffic light as it changes to GREEN.

Strange does a double-take upon seeing the green light. He's got an idea.

Strange flies higher, in a widening spiral, taking in more of the city.

As he flies east, far below he sees a PULSING GREEN LIGHT: it looks just like the pulsing glow around his body.

Strange smiles and swoops down on it.

Unfortunately, it's a BLINKING GREEN LIT SIGN denoting a bar.

Strange flies back up, continuing to scan Manhattan.

WIDE AERIAL ANGLE OVER MANHATTAN

We see another green throbbing light, off in the distance in the middle of the street.

Strange's spirit form spots it too.

DR. STRANGE'S SPIRIT FORM

whooshes down, only to discover a SEQUENTIAL DETOUR SIGN denoting some street repairs.

Another bank clock shows that it's now 8:15. We hold as it changes to 8:16.

ABOVE MANHATTAN

Strange's spirit continues the search, now moving toward the Brooklyn bridge.

In the midst of a line of HEADLIGHTS AND TAILIGHTS on the Brooklyn side is a throbbing GREEN GLOW moving along. It turns down a side street and heads for the WHARF.

Strange spots it.

EXT. BROOKLYN WHARF - NIGHT

TWO ROUGH LOOKING CHARACTERS (WHISKERS and SATCH) are lifting DR. STRANGE'S body out of their NEW HATCHBACK CAR, which is parked near the end of a pier. The body is frozen in the same sitting position Strange was in at Liana's apartment.

We can hear the CAR RADIO.

NEWSCASTER (V.O. radio)
...WCBS newstime is now 8:34...

SATCH
I still say we ain't gettin' paid enough for this.

WHISKER
It paid for your car here, didn't it? Hold it, Satch, I wanna take this sucker's shirt. It's hot.

SATCH
Dammit, man, we can't touch him with that green shit around him. He don't even move. Let's just dump him and blow. I don't wanna miss "Dynasty."

WHISKERS
You shoulda taped it, man.

SATCH
Yeah, yeah, I forgot.

They carry Strange's body over to the edge of the dock and dump him into the East river.

The body sinks...and they watch as the green glow loses definition in the water...then suddenly changes BLUE.

Whiskers and Satch exchange a look, shrug, then turn and head back to their car only to react with shock.

Sitting calmly on the hood is DR. STRANGE, alive and well in his physical body.

STRANGE
Don't you boys know that dumping bodies without a permit is against the law?

The two of them stand there a moment in stark, open-mouthed terror...then Whiskers pulls a gun.

Strange concentrates---his amulet glows red and he is engulfed by the glow.

Whiskers hesitates. Neither he nor Satch know what's going on.

Dr. Strange shoots a red energy bolt at Whiskers, knocking him off the dock, and into the river.

Satch is dumbfounded.

Now Whiskers breaks the surface, flailing around helplessly.

WHISKERS
Help! I can't swim!

STRANGE
(to Satch)
Can YOU swim?

Satch nods vigorously.

STRANGE
Then you'd better save him.

SATCH
Yes, sir!

He dives into the water after Whiskers.

Several moments later, he comes up with Whiskers in tow...only to see Dr. Strange pushing their car off the end of the pier!

SATCH
Aw, shit!

The car drops into the river, sending a huge mass of water into the faces of the thugs.

Strange waves to them.

STRANGE
Good night, boys. Be good.

With that, he glows blue and vanishes into a dimensional portal.

ON WHISKERS AND SATCH, IN THE RIVER

WHISKERS
I guess you're gonna miss Dynasty, man.

SATCH
Shut up. Just shut up.

CUT TO:

INT. LIANA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Liana sits on her sofa, crying. She's a wreck.

A blue glow appears behind her, as a dimensional portal forms. DR. STRANGE steps out.

He watches her for a few moments; then she looks up and sees him. The shock of the surprise turns to elation.

LIANA
You're alive...! Oh, Stephen, thank God!

She throws her arms around him, sobbing.

CUT TO:

LIANA'S APARTMENT - A LITTLE LATER

Strange pours Liana a cup of coffee. She's now a little more composed. They've been talking.

LIANA
...I've never felt so used, so cheap in my life. Instead of avenging my brother, I disgraced him, and everything he believed.

STRANGE
Liana, listen: Mordo told you that I killed your brother, but he was talking about himself. He told you that I falsely took your brother's place under Nu-ruh-jas but he was talking about himself. What else did Mordo tell you about "me" and "my" plan?

LIANA
(thinking, remembering)
Well, he said you'd made a bargain with Dormammu for mystical power without limit in exchange for opening the doorway to the dark dimension and delivering...

She hesitates, fearful and concerned about the rest of the thought.

STRANGE
What? Delivering what?

LIANA
(gulps)
Delivering Dormammu's chosen sacrificial victim: Nu-ruh-jas.

Strange is shocked.

STRANGE
My God! I've got to---
(stops short, thinks)
Liana, you'd better come with me. If Mordo learns I'm alive, he may come after you.

Strange creates a blue dimensional portal. He takes her hand and they step through.

INT. HALL IN FRONT OF ANCIENT ONE'S ROOM - DAY

Dr. Strange and Liana step through the "other side" into the hallway outside the Ancient One's room. It is, of course, morning on the other side of the world.

Dr. Strange is pale and woozy from the physical and psychic drain taking Liana along on such a dimensional jump. He leans against the wall to catch his breath and regain his balance.

LIANA
Are you all right?

STRANGE
I think so.
(sighs)
I've never taken anyone with me before. It's hard.

Liana looks around, bewildered at the surroundings.

STRANGE
Don't go anywhere.

LIANA
I don't even know where I am.

Strange pulls himself together and opens the door to the Ancient One's room. He enters. Liana follows.

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S ROOM

Strange approaches the Ancient One's bed. It's empty, and Ishrom is changing the sheets. There is no sign of the Master.

STRANGE
Ishrom--where's the Master?

Ishrom does not seem too surprised to see Dr. Strange.

ISHROM
Why, he's with you, sir.

STRANGE
With me? Why would he be with me?

ISHROM
You took him away for his safety, half an hour ago.

STRANGE
Ishrom, I wasn't here half an hour ago.

ISHROM
You were indeed, sir. You had me give him medicine to make him sleep, remember? So as to ease the strain of travel? You said that Baron Mordo desired to abduct him, thus you were moving the Master to a secret location.

STRANGE
Dammit, Ishrom, that WAS Mordo! He must have used a hypnotic spell to deceive you. You say he had you give the Master medicine?

ISHROM
Yes, sir. At the time I wondered why you---he---was so insistent I administer it instead of you...him...

STRANGE
Because if the Master was conscious, he would have recognized Mordo's deception.

LIANA
Stephen, that means they could be anywhere right now. Anywhere in the world.

STRANGE
Right now, yes. But wherever the next total eclipse is going to be, that's where...and when...we'll find them.

CUT TO:

INT. ANCIENT ONE'S ROOM

CLOSE ON THE COVER OF THE 1967 WORLD ALMANAC

as Ishrom hands it to Dr. Strange.

WIDER

Strange pages through the almanac, trying to find the information he needs.

STRANGE
Solar eclipses...here we are...3 total eclipses this year...the next one is on the last day of this month. Totality 3 minutes, 9 seconds, visible in portions of North Africa, Turkey and the Middle East.

INSERT - ALMANAC PAGE

It shows a map of the world, with eclipse paths delineated. Strange's finger follows the particular one he's talking about.

BACK TO SHOT

as Strange shakes his head.

STRANGE
Damn! This encompasses an area of several hundred thousand square miles. No way are we going to find 2 people over that much territory.

Liana, who has seemed distracted by something, now speaks up.

LIANA
Stephen, how did Mordo know that the Ancient One was confined to his bed?

STRANGE
Huh? Well, it was Mordo's wolf that attacked him.

LIANA
But didn't you say that Mordo was gone by the time you killed it? He wouldn't have know how badly the Ancient One was injured...or even if he was injured at all.

STRANGE
True. And for that matter, how was it that Mordo managed to attack within a minute after I discovered Skulkane? Somebody here must be...

Strange now notices that the MIRROR in the Ancient One's room is covered with a drop cloth. Strange uncovers it.

STRANGE
The mirror was covered so as not to reflect Mordo's true image. Ishrom: who attended the room this morning?

ISHROM
Vylar.

CUT TO:

INT. MORDO'S OLD ROOM - DAY

VYLAR is scrubbing the floor. DR. STRANGE throws open the door and enters, full of arrogance: he is imitating Mordo.

STRANGE
Vylar! Get me my eclipse charts.

He slams the door behind him.

VYLAR
Baron! I didn't know you had returned. They're right here, as always.

Vylar activates a secret panel in the wall and pulls out a rolled up map.

Strange unrolls it. It shows the eastern Mediterranean. Plotted over the map is the path of the eclipse, along with several other symbols and markings, all of which cross paths in one particular spot, in Turkey.

VYLAR
Is there any problem, Baron Mordo?

STRANGE
Only one: I'm not Mordo.

With that, Strange uncovers the mirror in this room.

Vylar reacts with fear as he sees that the reflection is the same as the image.

He breaks for the door and opens it: Ishrom is there, with Liana behind him.

Vylar backs away.

STRANGE
Where's Mordo now? How do you contact him?

VYLAR
All right, I'll tell. Just don't hurt me. Please don't hurt me. Mordo is----

Vylar stops short and becomes glassy eyed, as if in a trance. His movements become strange, erratic. He pulls a knife out of his robe and STABS himself hara-kara style. He falls to the floor in a pool of blood.

Strange, Liana and Ishrom are shocked and sickened.

Strange looks again at the map.

STRANGE
No wonder Dormammu is eager to strike during this particular eclipse: he plans to take his revenge at the same place the master defeated him 700 years ago.

INSERT - MAP

The point of intersection of the paths on the map is at the northern edge of the Taurus Mountains, in central Turkey.

CUT TO:

EXT. ANKARA AIRPORT, TURKEY - DAY (STOCK)

A PAN-AM JET touches down on the runway.

INT. ANKARA AIRPORT CONCOURSE - DAY

Dr. Strange and Liana walk down the concourse with the other deplaning passengers. They each have small suitcases.

A sign says "Welcome to Turkey" in several languages.

LIANA
Somehow, I never expected that a master of the mystic arts would fly on a commercial airline.

STRANGE
It may not be as fast as dimensional warp travel, but it conserves psychic energy---and I'm going to to need everything I've got when we face Mordo.

INT. ANKARA AIRPORT PASSPORT CHECKPOINT

Strange and Liana are waiting in line for entrance visas.

They step up to the next available counter and hand their passports over to the TWO TURKISH CUSTOMS CLERKS on duty.

They check the passports and converse with one another in Turkish. The junior of the two speaks English and addresses Strange.

CLERK
(heavy Turkish accent)
What is the purpose of your trip, please? Business or pleasure?

Strange and Liana exchange a look.

STRANGE
Business.

The clerk looks at Strange suspciously.

CLERK
Business? And I suppose that is a business suit?

STRANGE
Well, in a sense it is.

CLERK
And what sort of business is it that brings you to Turkey?

STRANGE
It's a little hard to explain, but basically, we're here to protect the earth from a great danger.

The clerk looks at Strange like he's out of his mind. He turns to his supervisor and they talk in Turkish.

LIANA
(whispers to Strange)
I think you should have said we were tourists.

The clerk turns back to Strange.

CLERK
You say that your business is to protect the earth from danger?

STRANGE
Yes, sir.

The clerk and supervisor converse once again. The clerk is suspicious, but the supervisor seems to understand. He explains it to the clerk, who finally nods, then turns back to Strange.

CLERK
You are American Environmentalists!
National Geographic! Sierra Club!
I understand! Welcome to Turkey!
Have a pleasant visit.

He stamps both passports and hands them back.

STRANGE
Thank you very much.

Strange and Liana exchange a look of relief and move on.

INT. ANKARA AIRPORT

Strange and Liana continue along through the busy airport.

STRANGE
I guess it's time for a little
astral reconnaisance.

LIANA
Stephen, you can't just leave your
body in the middle of a crowded
airport, glowing green.

Strange thinks a moment, then something across the way catches his eye.

STRANGE
Yes, I can. I'll be back for you
in an hour.

Strange hurries across the corridor and goes into the MEN'S ROOM.

Liana smiles. She turns and looks up at

A CLOCK

It's a little after 1:00. The round clock

DISSOLVES TO:

EXT. THE SUN

The yellow orb of the sun burns bright in the crytal blue Turkish sky.

We TILT DOWN to reveal the same rocky terrain we saw in the prologue, where MORDO has laid the unconscious ANCIENT ONE upon a large flat rock in preparation for a classic human sacrifice.

Mordo looks up at the sun. The moon begins its passage. Mordo raises his arms, holding up the complete SKULKANE.

MORDO
Hail the dread Dormammu, Bringer of Darkness, Source of all Evil! Let your will be done! In moments I shall bring you forth with the sacrificial destruction of your enemy.

He turns to the Ancient One and puts a vial with a potion beside him.

MORDO
With these herbs, I shall revive him an instant before the death blow, so that he will know that it is his death that brings Dormammu life.

STRANGE (O.S.)
Really, Mordo?

Mordo whirls around, totally astonished to see DR. STRANGE standing a few hundred feet away.

MORDO
YOU!

STRANGE
(calls out)
Now, Liana!

Behind and to one side of Mordo, Liana appears from behind a rock with a CROSSBOW (one that we saw in her office). She FIRES at Mordo.

Her aim is true: the arrow pierces Mordo's hand, causing him to drop Skulkane! He screams in pain, then pulls out the shaft.

The sun is half gone.

STRANGE
Mordo, it's you and me now.

Strange's amulet glows red and engulfs him in red energy. Just as he fires,

Mordo's ring glows blue and he creates a blue escape portal which he dives through, just in time.

LIANA
Stephen, behind you!

Strange spins around to see Mordo there, now charged with red energy.

Strange too recharges with red energy, and as Mordo fires a mystic bolt at him, Strange deflects it with a bolt of his own.

Again Mordo fires a blast at Strange; again Strange deflects it.

Darkness descends as the sun vanishes behind the moon.

And, as in the prologue, the doorway to the dark dimension again takes form as a shimmering atmospheric disturbance, revealing the out of focus image of DORMAMMU.

The stalemate between Strange and Mordo continues.

Liana watches the battle from her place behind the rock. She raises her crossbow, and again takes aim at Mordo. She fires.

The arrow flies directly at Mordo, but upon contact with the red energy, it bursts into flame. Mordo doesn't even notice it.

Liana curses under her breath. Her weapon is useless.

Now the eclipse reaches totality...Dormammu appears in sharp focus...and the Ancient One remains unconscious, with the sealed glass vial of the reviving herbs beside him.

Dormammu's voice reverberates through the air and ground.

DORMAMMU
Finish him, Mordo! The time is short!

Mordo circles around Strange and shoots a blast into the rock cliff behind him. A huge wall of rock collapses.

Strange braces himself for the impact, behind his aura of red energy---and he is buried by tons of falling rock.

Liana is horrified.

Mordo laughs triumpantly.

Liana looks over at the Ancient One and sees the vial of reviving herbs beside him. She creeps toward him, trying to stay out of Mordo's sight.

Now there is movement and red glowing energy within the pile of fallen rock as Dr. Strange cuts his way out.

Mordo can't believe it.

DORMAMMU
Forget the mortal! Get Skulkane and kill the Ancient One!

Mordo picks up Skulkane, which is now GLOWING ORANGE. He turns toward the Ancient One---and sees Liana is there and has picked up the vial of herbs. She stands between Mordo and the Ancient One.

MORDO
Out of my way!

LIANA
No, Mordo. You've got to answer for my brother.

Mordo takes a step forward and Liana throws the glass vial at him. It shatters in his face, and he turns away, in pain. Then she leaps on him, knocking him down. They struggle, with Mordo still tightly clutching Skulkane.

Liana fights viciously against her stronger adversary, scratching, biting and kicking.

Just as Strange emerges from the debris of the avalanche...

MORDO STABS LIANA IN THE BACK WITH SKULKANE! She SCREAMS!

Strange's eyes open wide with horror.

STRANGE
Liana!

Liana falls to the ground with Skulkane firmly imbedded in her spine.

Strange rushes over to her---but she's dead.

Strange faces Mordo, his eyes filling with wrath.

Mordo backs away.

Suddenly, the ORANGE GLOW of Skulkane shoots a huge SPARK into the Dark Dimension. The cloudless dark sky erupts with COLORED LIGHTNING and THUNDER as the doorway to the DARK DIMENSION takes hard, physical form.

It is a cosmic spectacle, a display of imagery and power that goes far beyond the confict between Mordo and Dr. Strange. Both of them witness it in silent awe.

Now the ground literally catches fire at the junction of the dark dimension, and the atmosphere echoes with the eerie, frightening laughter of the dread Dormammu.

DORMAMMU steps forward and for the first time in eons, sets foot upon the earth. FIRE burns where his feet touch the ground.

DORMAMMU
At last, the conditions have been fulfilled! I am freed by the liberation of a human soul!

Now Mordo gets up and approaches Dormammu with outstretched arms.

MORDO
Welcome, most exalted Dormammu! I, the great Baron Mordo, have brought you here as I promised. Now, it is your turn to do as you promised, and grant me the vast mystical power which will make me the most powerful man on earth.

Dormammu is enraged.

DORMAMMU
Silence, you arrogant fool! You dare speak to Dormammu as an equal? You dare make a demand of me?

Mordo backs off a little.

MORDO
I make no demands of the great Dormammu. I merely wish to remind him of our bargain.

DORMAMMU
I am Dormammu! I need not fulfill bargains with puny mortals! I am beyond such simplistic concepts! You were but an instrument of my will, a pawn in my cosmic plan.

MORDO
I am no one's pawn, Dormammu. I ask only just compensation for my service to you.

DORMAMMU
Very well, impudent one, I shall give you your choice of rewards: be gone from my sight, or be destroyed by my power.

Mordo's face knits into an expression of rage. His ring glows red, and he is engulfed by red energy.

Dormammu raises his hand and shoots a white hot focused beam of energy which cuts right through the red energy and disintegrates Mordo's ring.

Mordo reacts like a scared rabbit and runs like hell.

Dormammu laughs.

Dr. Strange, still beside the dead Liana, has seen all of this...and to say he is worried would be an understatement.

Dormammu approaches the Ancient One, still unconscious where Mordo left him.

DORMAMMU
Ah, my hated enemy. My moment of vengeance has arrived. Arise from your drugged stupor so that you may gaze upon my countenance...and know that it is the last thing you will ever see.

Dormammu waves his hand, and the Ancient One stirs. He opens his eyes---and is terrified to find himself face to face wih Dormammu.

DORMAMMU
I told you this day would come.
I've waited for over 700 years.

Now Dr. Strange stands.

STRANGE
Well, you're going to have to wait
even longer.

DORMAMMU
So...another worthless human dares
challenge the power of Dormammu.

STRANGE
That's right. And you can't to do
to me what you did to Mordo, because
my amulet is invulnerable.

ANCIENT ONE
Stephen, no! It's not invulnerable!

But Strange ignores him. The amulet glows red, and the red energy engulfs him.

DORMAMMU
(laughs)
Audacious fool! Dormammu shall
humiliate you in exactly the same way!

Exactly as before, Dormammu raises his hand and fires a beam of white hot energy toward Strange's amulet.

But at the same time, Strange lets his red energy dispel and with a jerk of his right arm, produces SKULKANE from UP HIS SLEEVE in the same SLEIGHT OF HAND MANUEVER he executed for Liana at Helene's party. Strange whips Skulkane into the path of Dormammu's beam of energy.

Thus, DORMAMMU'S BEAM OF ENERGY DISINTEGRATES SKULKANE!

The results are cataclysmic: Dormammu is sucked back into his own dimension, in a spectacular IMPLOSION that warps both light and space. Reality itself seems torn asunder. Dormammu SCREAMS in hideous agony---it's a horrifying sound, as unnerving as fingernails on a chalkboard, as powerful as the bellow of elephants. It's all accompanied by COLORED LIGHTNING and booming THUNDER.

And then, it's over.

As the smoke clears and the sunlight returns, everything returns to a semblance of normality.

Dr. Strange and the Ancient One catch their breaths.

This was no mere dream or nightmare. The evidence is remains: the aftermath of the rockslide that felled Dr. Strange, the scorched ground where the dark dimension intersected our own, Dormammu's footprints...and, sadly, Liana, cold and still.

The Ancient One stands and surveys the scene, looking in the direction of where the Dark Dimension was.

ANCIENT ONE
"By the power of Dormammu was Skulkane created; only by the power of Dormammu could it be destroyed." The raw energy and strength of the mightiest of all beings amounts to nothing beside the cleverness of the human mind.
(turns to Strange)
Forgive me for doubting you, my son.

STRANGE
Believe me, I had plenty of doubt myself.

Strange turns and looks down at Liana with sadness. Then he realizes something and looks off toward the open wilderness where Mordo ran.

STRANGE'S P.O.V. OF

the vast plateau. Off in the distance can be seen a human figure.

STRANGE

reacts with determined resolve. He closes his eyes and his amulet glows blue.

CUT TO:

EXT. TURKISH PLATEAU

MORDO is making his way toward some distant hills.

Now a blue glow appears 100 yards in front of him, and DR. STRANGE steps out of it.

Mordo freezes, his mouth drops open.

Strange walks slowly toward him, saying nothing, an avenging angel filled with rage.

Mordo is scared to death.

Strange keeps coming.

MORDO
Strange! Please don't kill me! It was all a mistake! I didn't mean to kill her! I swear! Dormammu made me do it! You heard what he said---he used me! I was his tool! I didn't mean it!

Dr. Strange speaks quietly, calmly, with total control.

STRANGE
You're a liar. You're a cheat. You're a murderer. And I've been waiting to do this for a long time.

Strange lets fly with a roundhouse to Mordo's face; then a left, then a right uppercut.

Mordo crumples to the ground, unconscious.

Strange stands over him. His amulet glows red, engulfing with the red energy of strength. He raises his arms, clasping his hands together, preparing to really let loose...

But he can't do it. He struggles with himself a moment; then the red energy dispels and he sighs.

He looks up and sees the ANCIENT ONE there.

STRANGE
I can't kill him. As much as I want to see him dead, I can't kill him.

ANCIENT ONE
Killing him isn't necessary.

The Ancient One glows blue, and creates a dimensional portal on the ground around Mordo. Mordo fall into it, and the portal vanishes.

Strange looks at the Ancient One, asking the question with his eyes.

ANCIENT ONE
You don't want to know. Suffice to say that there IS such a thing as a fate worse than death.

EXT. MONASTERY GARDEN - DAY

Strange places flowers on a freshly dug grave while the Ancient One looks on.

Strange sighs, holding back a tear.

STRANGE
Even though Mordo is gone, I still don't feel satisfied.

ANCIENT ONE
You never will, my son. Senseless death leaves no satisfaction.
In time, the wound will heal. But the scar will always remain.

Strange nods.

The Ancient One creates a dimensional portal, then puts his arm around Dr. Strange.

ANCIENT ONE
Life goes on, Stephen. There is much to learn, much to accomplish.
For now, let us face it together.
She would want it that way.

Strange nods. They enter into the dimensional portal and vanish...to who knows where...?

ROLL END TITLES.

FADE OUT